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Thursday August 29 1996

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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR 46,544


L Ron Hubbard's followers launch TV drive

Pre-packed Scientology



The women who fall for bodyguards

They're not just for the taking



OnLine

Shock tactics: a new way to predict earthquakes

G2 page 12/13

Debts row splits Labour Party in key constituency



Activists say leadership stifling debate on candidate's record

Soumas Mhine
Labour Editor

THE Labour hierarchy was last night accused of suppressing debate about the business record of a would-be parliamentary candidate with a history of company failures and court-enforced debts.

Internal controversy has erupted again in the key marginal constituency of Leeds North East, where the Labour leadership last year over-

turned the selection of a left-wing lawyer, Liz Davies. The row is over Fabian Hamilton, a Tony Blair-supporting Leeds councillor who is regarded as the favourite for the re-run selection on Sunday.

Leading constituency members — including former supporters of Ms Davies — have assembled a dossier of court and company documents which they insist, show Mr Hamilton is unfit to be their MP. Leaked correspondence confirms that national and regional officials have inter-

vened to block discussion about his financial affairs at party meetings.

Mr Hamilton last night accused his constituency critics of running a "disgraceful smear campaign" against him to boost the fortunes of the left-wing candidate, Pam Tallow, and take their revenge against the party leadership over the Davies affair. "I have never done anything illegal or immoral and have nothing to hide," he said.

The dispute follows local selection battles in Swindon, Exeter and Glasgow Govan which have been fuelled by the tensions over the direction taken by Mr Blair's leadership.

Austin

DO YOU INTEND TO VOTE LABOUR OR BUSTAL DOUBLE GLAZING?



£20 fee casts royal couple asunder

John Ezzard
and Owen Rowland

THE first divorce of a British royal couple since the death of Queen Victoria in 1861, with only a few signs of the watershed it marks in British constitutional and public life.

Fifteen years and 30 days after their wedding at St Paul's, the marriage of Prince Charles and Princess Diana reached its close less than a mile away at the High Court in London.

The instrument was decre absolute — number 5,025, evidence of the fact that they are hardly alone in their misfortune. It put them finally asunder in 176 words.

After the estimated £15 million divorce settlement, the final reckoning was less expensive. In return for the standard fee of £20, Robin West, chief clerk to the court's Family Division, issued the decree.

As at their wedding up the road, every detail of the divorce was subject to scrutiny. Somerset House staff recorded that the marriage ended at 10.20am and that it was the 5,025th decree absolute processed this year.

Copies of the historic document were later made available for £1 each, an unpoetic souvenir to add to the royal mugs, brochures and plaques produced for the marketing of the marriage in 1981.

Six weeks after the divorce was granted, the certificate records: "And no cause having been shown, it is hereby certified that the said decree was on the 28th day of August 1996 made final and absolute and that the said marriage was thereby dissolved."

Charles remained behind the walls of Balmoral all day. Elsewhere in the family's summer holiday, there was a tendency to seek even greater privacy by taking to the hills.

The Queen went riding alone by the river Dee. The Duke of Edinburgh went fishing alone on a trout loch; prudent escapes from morning television bulletins which were leading on a mildly jarring gesture by Diana.

She turned up at a long-neglected visit to the English National Ballet wearing her wedding and engagement rings, watched by a crowd which happened to contain an instant expert on such conduct.

"It's not a sign of letting go," said David Cohen, author of *Body Language in Relationships*. "I think it's an un-



Princess Diana wearing her wedding and engagement rings at an English National Ballet lunch yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: Dan Grant

Titanic still mass grave say experts

John Ezzard

THE 84-year-old wreck of the Titanic is still very likely to be a mass grave, with human remains scattered in and around it, British scientists said yesterday.

Their finding emerged as the shadow shipping minister, Glenda Jackson, attacked efforts to lift part of the liner's hull to the surface. Last night tourists paying up to \$5,000 each watched as a second attempt was made.

The tourists — on two cruise ships containing casinos — saw the wreck site 420 miles off Newfoundland brilliantly floodlit on closed-circuit television.

A first effort to raise the hull section, complete with portholes, failed on Tuesday when a flotation balloon did not inflate.

The new scientific opinions, from a survey of British forensic and oceanographic specialists, provide evidence that the expedition is "grave-robbing", according to the British Titanic Society.

Six out of seven specialists, who were sent written questions by the society's quarterly bulletin, replied that it was "probable" that bone and teeth fragments of some of the 1,522 victims had survived in and around the ship.

More intact remains could be in cabins and sealed areas like cool rooms and strong rooms.

Southampton University oceanography centre said: "There are almost certainly some remains in the immediate area." Professor Laurence Garey, of Charing Cross and Westminster Medical School, said: "Boney remains are probably still there."

The New York company behind this week's cruise, RMS Titanic Inc, has already sold coal collected from the debris around the ship.

It defends itself against charges of grave-robbing by stressing that it does not plan to breach the two main hull sections of the wreck.

Yesterday the bulletin editor, Brian Titchmarsh, the naval historian, said: "Our survey means that the expedition is most certainly grave-robbing."

Son of Beefy follows family line — and length — in debut

John Durnon
Sports Correspondent

BOUNDING into the ground late, throwing down a few looseballs and then with his seventh ball taking the wicket of a former England captain with a legside full toss, Liam Botham, the 19-year-old son of Ian, yesterday entered the family business — first class cricket — with a starting five for 67 for Hampshire.

"I went over to wish him

all the best and this is the way he repays me," said Mike Gatting, Botham's first victim. "Ian was a first class batsman, got me out in 15 years, but then his boy gets me out in seven balls. Good luck to him."

Liam's debut was typically dramatic. He was 15 minutes late for the match, having been erroneously sent to Southampton for a second XI game. He was further delayed by a traffic accident on the M27 and arrived with 12 balls already bowled.

"I suppose people will say this is a typical Botham start," said Botham. "But I am Liam, not Ian, and I intend to make my own way. There was an element of good fortune about the wickets, but they all count. My dad was accused of the same thing, but he liked to think he bowled people out."

His father, who missed his son's unexpected debut, was notorious for picking up wickets off terrible balls and would have recognised the manner of some of yesterday's dismissals.

After Gatting came John Carr (nick to keeper off short wideish ball), then Richard Johnson (caught and bowled off full toss), then Richard Fay (soft catch to covers) and finally Phil Tufnell (caught behind, but refused to walk he was so agitated).

In fact, Liam made a far more auspicious start than his father. Ian's first-class debut was at The Parks against Oxford University on May 11, 1974, where he was out for two and had figures of nought for 10. His first wicket, 16 days later,

was M.S.T. Dunstan, a Gloucestershire tallender trapped lbw for 10, with Botham posting poor bowling figures of one for 51.

The Botham legend was born two months later in a limited overs match against Hampshire. Somerset were way behind at 113 for eight. Botham came in and for his first ball had three teeth knocked out by Andy Roberts. After a glass of water he resumed play and slogged Somerset to victory.



Liam Botham... better start than his father

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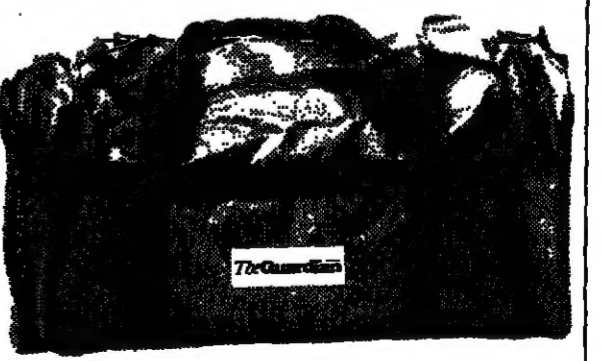
G2

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Sketch

Robotic Hillary leaves them flat



Jonathan Freedland

In San Diego we got the Oprah Winfrey Show. In Chicago we got Jackanory. At the Republican bash, Elizabeth Dole stole the hearts of the convention crowd when she played television talk-show hostess and plunged into the audience to deliver an apparently off-the-cuff ode to "the man I love" — a psalm she has delivered word for word at campaign stops across America. The fact that it was utterly spontaneous and choked with saccharin mattered not a jot. As the First-Lady-in-Waiting she set the standard the real First Lady had to match. There was a good deal of participation for this contest. The entrepreneurial folk of Michigan Avenue were making a rapid buck on badges urging "Give 'Em Hell, Hillary". There were few takers among the White House staffers in town, who have suffered seeing Mrs Clinton spend the last four years following the badges' advice to the letter. Stand-up comedian Pat Paulsen, who doubles as America's Screaming Lord Sutch, running for president regularly since 1968, said it might be simpler if the two ladies scrapped the speeches and started mud-wrestling. But there was no such action on the podium at Chicago. Instead the charmingly named Second Lady, Tipper Gore, played warm-up woman while fleet-footed aides among the 4,300 delegates handed out white sticks to any takers. Was the crowd about to be led in some peasants' revolt, brandishing shafts on the orders of Hillary-day Boudicca? Were the Democrats about to stage a psychodrama re-enactment of 1968, wielding the faux-truncheons in memory of the police riot that last greeted their gathering here? Not at all. The sticks were to be joined to the pre-printed signs that

each delegate clutched to their lap. "Welcome Home Hillary", "Chicago Loves Hillary", they said — a warm reminder that Hillary Rodham grew up in the Windy City. Grew up, incidentally, as a Republican. Her new party forgave her that, forgave her fuziness on Whitewater, her solarium seances with the spirit of Eleanor Roosevelt, her torpedoing of the health care reform flagship of the Clinton presidency — they forgave it all, in a thundering ovation. It lasted for minutes, drowning out her attempts to start speaking. Then, in a novel act at a political convention, the delegates stamped their feet. Raw and heartfelt, the sound was loudest among the women, who sense that when a man attacks Hillary, he is having a go at all of them. But here is the funny thing: the cheers before she spoke were far stronger than those afterwards. She had taken an audience bursting with enthusiasm and deflated them faster than a convention balloon. It was not enough to speak about family values, one had to "take a village", she said in flat, almost robotic tones, as if dictating a letter down a rosy phone line. Or competing for the school education prize. Her chief theme was a play on the title of her book, It Takes a Village (to raise a child). This has become the defining metaphor of the Clinton administration — hence Bob Dole's rebuttal in San Diego: "With all due respect, it does not take a village," he said. "It takes a family." In Chicago, Hillary got her own back. Yes, of course it took parents like her and Bill (a subtle dig at Elizabeth Dole, who has no children), but it also took a village. And she added a twist: "It takes a president. It takes Bill Clinton." She seemed nervous, as if cowed by the buckets of vitriol that have been heaped on her since her husband took office. When she came on, the "video wall" showed archive shots of Hillary in 1992, when Tipper and Hillary clasped each other and did a cheerleader bob of their heads from side to side. Tipper had not changed at all. But Hillary was another person. And the chant of "Four More Years" sounded less like a hope than a curse.

Clinton centre-stage, page 6

First night

Pessimist pins his hopes on women

Michael Billington

Time and the Room Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh

In Germany, and throughout most of Europe, Botho Strauss is big news: 400 critics, myself included, lately attended the Munich premiere of his libretto. In Britain he has scarcely touched the surface. But Time and the Room, seen last year at the Gate, resurfaces in Edinburgh in a stylish Nottingham Playhouse production, directed by Martin Duncan, that proves Strauss is one of the most cryptically intriguing contemporary playwrights. In Germany Strauss is notorious for his alleged swing from left to right; and what is fascinating about this play, written in 1989, is that it reveals both sides of his character. In part, it displays an instinctive feminism and applauds the ability of women to defeat patriarchal structures. Yet it also has something of the quirky social pessimism of fifties absurdist writers such as Ionesco. It is this tension that makes it such an ambiguous play. In the first half we watch as two men sit in a room that is part executive office, part chic art gallery, and gaze warily at the street below. They observe the restless unease and futility of city life and, as they describe characters from the world outside, so these start to invade their ivory tower. The dialogue, in Jeremy Sams's new translation, is lively. But you can't help feeling there is something reactionary about Strauss's despair at the emptiness of daily

reality. "In this life," says one character, "all we've got is our memories. All the rest is looking through the window until you vanish from the face of the earth." So much for the possibility of social progress. But there is another, more radical side to Strauss that emerges through the central character of Marie Stuber: a constantly shifting, adaptable figure who shows that women contain multiple selves. At times, she seems like Wedekind's Lulu in that she is the creation of male fantasies. At other times, she mercifully re-invents herself in one fine scene she runs rings round a sweaty potential employer by teasingly pretending to be in love with him. What the play finally says is anybody's guess; but, in Duncan's production and Anita Dobson's striking performance, the emphasis is very much on female resilience in a disintegrating world. The production also brings out Strauss's humour: most especially through the eccentric, slightly bigoted window-gazing Julius and Olat, played, respectively, by Tyrone Kingins and John Ramm as a cool dandy and a quivering neurotic. There is also immaculate design and lighting by Wolfart Gohel who creates an hygienic white space that becomes a vehicle for trompe l'oeil effects. Even on a third viewing the play sometimes baffles, but at its heart lies an intriguing contest between Strauss's loathing of our consumerist culture and his radical belief in the multi-facetedness of woman. This review appeared in later editions yesterday.

New gene may be breakthrough in battle against some cancers

Jane Alfred

THE discovery of a virus-attacking gene which could lead to a breakthrough in the battle against some forms of cancer and other viral diseases is announced by scientists today. It is hoped the gene, which has eluded scientists for more than two decades, will provide

new clues as to how certain viruses, called retroviruses, cause diseases such as leukaemia and AIDS. Jonathan Stoye, head of the research team, said: "It (the gene) attacks a novel part of the retroviral life cycle. It gives us a new spot, a new starting point. We have solved what is essentially one of the holy grails of this particular field."

Labour demands watchdog inquiry into GEC deal as shareholders fume over 'too easy' bonus clause

£10m pay stirs fat cat row

Roger Coote and Sarah Whitebloom

LABOUR yesterday accused engineering and electronics giant GEC of flouting rules aimed at stopping excessive pay and easy bonuses by offering its new managing director a pay package worth up to £10 million over the next five years. George Simpson's deal also drew sharp criticism from major investors and brought the prospect of a public slanging match at the group's shareholder meeting next week. Labour trade and industry spokesman Nigel Griffiths claimed the deal made a

"mockery" of the Greenbury committee's recommendations on top pay and perks. The committee, chaired by Marks & Spencer chairman Sir Richard Greenbury, was set up in the wake of the pay scandals in the utilities and created a code of practice. Mr Griffiths said: "It sets a very bad example to everyone when the Government is advising pay restraint. I think that Greenbury should look at this specific package and should make recommendations." Shareholders complain that Mr Simpson's contract was slipped out too late for them to take action on, and that it sets criteria for achieving hefty bonuses which are too easy to meet. Anne Simpson of PIRC, the

pay and pensions advice body, said the terms and conditions should have been included in the report and account to shareholders. She described the performance-related criteria as "patently ridiculous". "There is no point in having a performance criterion which is such a low hurdle you can hop over it at almost any point in the company's programme," she said. "You may as well simply give somebody a bag of cash." Several leading financial institutions claim the deal breaches rules endorsed by the Association of British Insurers, designed to ensure that huge bonuses can only be won by exceptional performance. Richard Regan of the ABI

said last night: "The company has done the right thing in disclosing the terms of the contract, but the performance conditions do not seem to be demanding enough." A spokeswoman for Norwich Union said the insurance company was "fairly unhappy" with the apparent bonus conditions, but was trying to clarify the details. Mr Simpson's contract stipulates a salary of £600,000, plus an annual bonus up to half that amount, and generous pension payments. It also provides for share options to be awarded each year at the discretion of the board's Remuneration Committee, and includes a further long-term incentive scheme, the combination of which could

reach eight times his salary. Shareholders are particularly angry at the performance criteria attached to the long-term bonus. The scheme will pay cash based on GEC's share price performance, but judges performance only over a six-month period and requires GEC shares to perform only 10 per cent better than the average of the top 100 companies. Several shareholders said Mr Simpson's deal must have been necessary to lure him from the top post at engineering group Lucas. One pointed out that GEC had been under pressure from shareholders to make an outside appointment, and would inevitably have to pay heavily for the right calibre person.



George Simpson... tempted from top job at Lucas

Arafat in showdown with Israel

PLO president says Israel has 'declared war' on Palestinians

Derek Brown in Jerusalem

THE Palestinian legislative council yesterday called for a halt to all contacts with Israel, hours after President Yasser Arafat had accused the Jewish state of declaring war on the Palestinians by its hardline policies on settlements and Jerusalem. Dramatically raising the stakes in his increasingly acrimonious stand-off with the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, Mr Arafat called a general strike throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip today. He also urged all Palestinians, including those living in Israel, to convene at Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque tomorrow for Friday prayers. It was the Palestine Liberation Organisation leader's first call for mass action since the days of the intifada, when strikes regularly paralysed the occupied territories. Mr Netanyahu responded sharply, warning that the government would regard any violence "with severity". Palestinian sources say Mr Arafat is exasperated with Israel's reluctance to resume serious negotiations on long-standing disputes, notably the redeployment of occupation forces in the West Bank town of Hebron. The Palestinians also deeply resent Mr Netanyahu's encouragement for renewed Jewish settlement in the West Bank, unveiled earlier this week. The frustration surfaced yesterday as Mr Arafat addressed the Palestinian council in the West Bank town of Ramallah. He said that the "continuous violations [of the peace accords] and crimes from this new Israeli leadership mean they are declaring a state of war against the Palestinian people". He pointedly focused the dispute on Jerusalem — claimed by Israel and the Palestinians as their capital, where the Israelis this week demolished a Palestinian community centre in the Arab Old Town. "Israel has started the war on Jerusalem. They are idiots to have started the Jerusalem battle. There will be no Palestinian state without Jerusalem," Mr Arafat declared. He called a token general stoppage "for Jerusalem" throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, from 8am to midday today. More flamboyantly, he urged all Palestinians, including those in Israel, to convene on the al-Aqsa mosque for Friday prayers. Jewish and Christian supporters



Yasser Arafat arrives for a crisis meeting of the Palestinian legislative council yesterday

should accompany them, he said. The PLO leader's outburst was received coldly by the Israeli government. The prime minister's office rejected "any attempt to bring about escalation or violence that could harm the peace process".

emerging understandings between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to advance their negotiations on a number of important issues". A Palestinian cabinet minister, Saeb Erekat, led about

50 dovish Israelis and Palestinians on a solidarity visit to the 50 families of the Jabhalin tribe, who have been given until September 4 to move from their camps to a new location designated by the Israeli government. — Reuters.

Kidnap accused is freed in error

Alan Travis Home Affairs Editor

A MAN awaiting trial for kidnapping was among more than 500 inmates freed from prison in the "early release" fiasco, the Prison Service confirmed last night. The man was released by mistake by Norwich prison on Friday but later re-arrested in a nasty incident in which his four-year-old son was allegedly injured. The incident highlights the difficulties which will face the police if Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, wins today's High Court battle over the legality of his decision to suspend the early release programme and if he orders the return to jail of the 537 prisoners set free. The last option is unlikely but Mr Howard is seeking legal advice on whether it is possible. In the Norwich incident, police went round to the man's home when the prison discovered its mistake. The door was answered by his wife who apparently denied any knowledge of the prisoner. However, his four-year-old son reportedly piped up: "But mummy, daddy is upstairs." The police forced their way into the house and, allegedly after a violent struggle, the man was arrested. Prison service sources claim the boy was injured. A Prison Service spokesman explained that the man was serving a sentence as well as being on remand for the alleged kidnapping. He was released with 537 other prisoners when the new Prison Service guidance, on how time spent on remand was to be deducted from sentences, was issued. "They did not notice that there were outstanding warrants when the sentence calculation was done," he added. Mr Howard is hoping that a High Court hearing today will end this latest nightmare for the Prison Service. Two judges will rule on whether he acted lawfully in suspending the early release policy or is guilty of falsely imprisoning up to 4,000 inmates whose sentences have been wrongly calculated. The Director-General of the Prison Service, Richard Tilt, admitted on Tuesday that the whole affair had been "gravely mishandled" and he had to offer a humiliating personal apology to Mr Howard. The Prison Service spokesman insisted that officials were not aware of any more "surprises" in connection with the debacle.

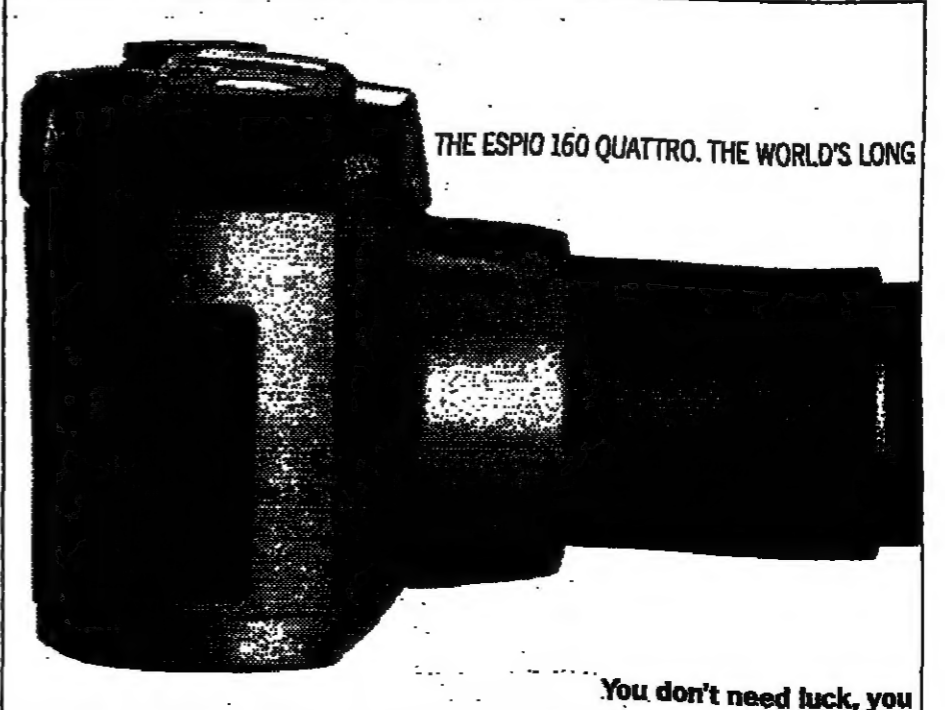
TV switch to the big screen

Nicholas Barnister Technology Editor

DUTCH electronics giant Philips yesterday unveiled what it hopes will be the biggest revolution in television — a large flat TV screen which can be hung on the wall like a painting. The group said that its new TV, with its 42.8 inch wide, 24 inch high and 4 inch thick cinema-format screen, would go on sale next spring for about £9,000 and it expects sales to top one million by the end of the century. The new product is more than a TV screen. It can be used as a computer monitor, compatible with the three main TV standards — PAL, NTSC, and Secam.

"When the TV is not in use the screen can be used to carry large pictures of anything from your favourite snags or a Guggenheim painting," a company spokesman said. "You can even change the picture at regular intervals and use it for playing computer games." Electronics groups have been trying for years to develop large flat screens but have found that they have been unable to make big liquid crystal displays screens without large numbers of pixels and the dots which make up the screen — failing to work. There also tends to be a time lag with fast moving images. The spokesman said with the new screen each pixel was made up of a gas/plasma mixture which

changed colour when electrically charged. At first the screen will be connected by wire to a box containing the main TV electronics, but Philips is developing wireless links. It expects customers will want to connect the screen not only to the basic TV works but also to computers, video recorders, camcorders and the like. "Customers will not want wires coming down from the screen like spaghetti," the spokesman said. "Ultimately you will turn the screen on and it will automatically tune itself in to the other appliances in the room." Philips unveiled its new TV, to go on sale next spring, at the CeBIT Home Electronics Show in Hannover, Germany.

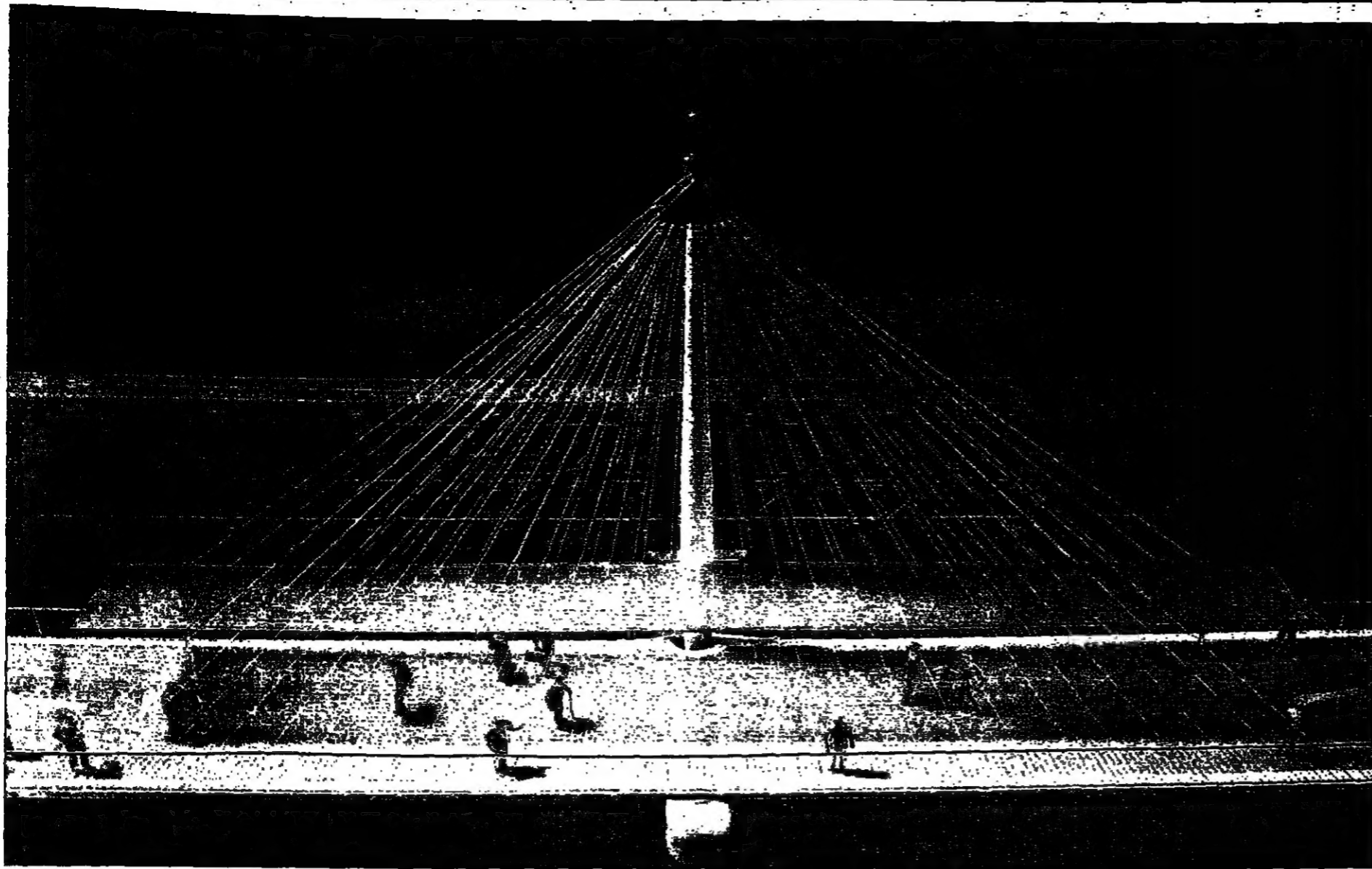


You don't need luck, you

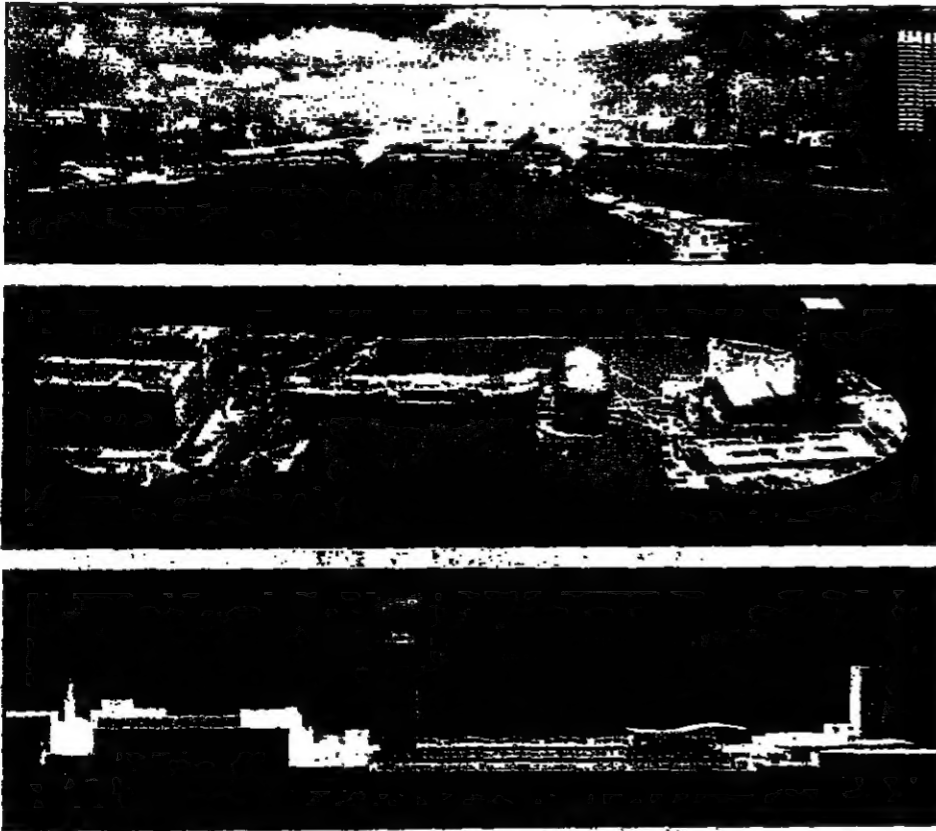
سكنا من البحر

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Maev Kennedy on the stretches of imagination creating a futuristic riverside for London



A section of the design by architects Lifschutz Davidson which is intended to replace the Hungerford pedestrian bridge between Charing Cross and Waterloo. PHOTOGRAPH: PHILIP BERG PHOTOGRAPHY



Three of the designs for potential habitable bridges, which the public will vote on: top, the Future Systems entry; middle, the Branson Coates entry; bottom, the entry by Antoine Grumbach. PHOTOGRAPH: ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

'Seaside pier' bridge to replace Thames eyesore

LONDON was offered a broad sweep of new bridges across the Thames yesterday, although only one is likely to get off the drawing board — a £15 million sleek white steel "seaside pier" intended as a replacement for the Victorian Hungerford footbridge.

"This bridge is for use, for fun and for getting people back to the river," Alex Lifschutz said yesterday.

The present footbridge is one of the capital's most heavily used eyesores, carrying up to 2,000 people an hour. The original Hungerford bridge was built by Brunel in 1845 for pedestrians, carts and river boat loading. It was a commercial failure, and in 1865 was replaced by the present railway bridge, with the footbridge hung alongside.

Quit Ulster, loyalists tell hardliners

David Sharrock
Ireland Correspondent

THE loyalist paramilitary leadership last night moved decisively to stamp out growing dissent over its ceasefire by giving two hardliners 72 hours to get out of Ulster or face "summary justice".

The move comes amid increasing fears that the Ulster Volunteer Force is about to end its ceasefire and appears to mark the climax of a potentially explosive rift between the Belfast leadership — which favours maintaining the ceasefire — and mid-Ulster elements which claim considerable grassroots support.

The two men named in a statement issued by the Combined Loyalist Military Command — the umbrella leadership of the UVF, Ulster Freedom Fighters and Red Hand Commando — are Billy Wright, also known as King Rat, and Alec Kerr.

Within hours of the statement, Mr Wright attacked the CLMC but did not say what he intended to do about the apparent threat to his life. Mr Wright's involvement in the Orange Order's stand-off at Drumcree, outside Portadown in Co Armagh, last month was highlighted on television. He was involved in discussions with the Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, about loyalist tactics in response to the RUC's refusal to allow Orangemen to return from a church service past a Catholic housing estate.

During the confrontation, a Catholic taxi driver, Michael McGoldrick from Lurgan, was murdered. All three loyalist paramilitary groups denied involvement and the UVF said it would carry out an investigation. Mr Kerr is an unemployed glazier and former Ulster Democratic Party representative in south Belfast. He moved to mid-Ulster last year after a disagreement with his party leadership and is presently on remand facing a terrorism charge.

Last night's statement reads: "The CLMC having concluded an ongoing investigation issue the following directive. As from midnight tonight Mr Billy Wright has 72 hours to leave Ulster. Mr Alec Kerr must remain at all times in isolation whilst in custody. Upon his release he must leave Ulster within 72 hours."

"Failure by either man to conform with this directive will result in summary justice for their treasonable and subversive activities. Anyone supporting these persons in any way or their actions will be similarly dealt with."

Mr Wright commented later: "I will not have anyone impose alien politics on me. I find it incredible that these two organisations demanded a restraint after the murder of British citizens... and ordered their volunteers not to support the Orange Institution at Drumcree... yet they would dare threaten a true loyalist. I will leave it up to the Unionist people to judge these people."

Both men live in Portadown, the "loyalist citadel" of Northern Ireland which is noted for its hardline opposition to the last decade's Anglo-Irish process. Mr Wright, aged 34, is well-known for his scepticism over the merits of maintaining a loyalist ceasefire now that the IRA has ended its own cessation.

Hijack passengers tell of 'bomb' terror

Alex Watkins
and Christopher Elliott

PASSENGER on the hijacked Sudanese Airbus gave a detailed account last night of the terror that broke out among the 160 passengers when they thought one of the men had a bomb.

As detectives continued to question the seven men and six women, all Iraqi, arrested following the conclusion of the siege at Stansted airport on Tuesday, Elagad A-Said, assistant marketing director for Sudan Air, who was travelling as a passenger, relived the moments they feared they would all die.

aircraft and there was a lot of chaos. It seems as if some of the passengers had grabbed one of the hijackers and detained him themselves. One of his colleagues was shouting for the passengers to let him go, he had something in his hand. He threatened to blow the plane up and obviously the passengers then let the man they had grabbed hold of go.

He said when the hijackers first made their move there was confusion. One passenger was cut with a knife as he struggled with a hijacker and wounded his arm.

which began on Monday afternoon. One male crew member was taken to hospital but the other, a passenger, did not require treatment. The passengers are expected to continue their journey today.

There was still no clear indication as to the identities of the hijackers, who are all being held at Harlow police station, or their motive other than the early indications

showed signs of sympathy for the Iraqis' plight yesterday, while others were keen to see their return to Iraq.

Mr Howard said the Crown Prosecution Service was considering prosecuting the hijackers, and added: "I believe that those who are guilty of the serious offence of hijacking should be brought to justice for it."

Death in prison hospital for the hijacker who went home

Christopher Elliott

YASSIN MEMBAR knows only too well the risks any hijacker faces on return to the country from which he was fleeing.



Yassin Membar: one of five who seized Tanzanian jet

Using an imitation gun and candlesticks made to look like dynamite the hijackers forced the pilot to fly to Nairobi, Jeddah, and Athens. Fourteen hostages had been freed before the aircraft reached Stansted.

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G2 page 7

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Armed robbers net £2m in raid on security van

Duncan Campbell
Crime Correspondent

A GANG of armed robbers yesterday escaped with £2 million in cash in the second London security van attack in less than a week.

The robbery is the latest example of an increase in attacks on security vans by professional criminals. They struck at 5pm on Tuesday as the van returned to the Security Express depot on an industrial estate at Barking, east London.

Two men held a handgun to the head of one of the guards while another guard was made to unload bags of cash believed to total about £2 million.

The money was put into green plastic wheelie-bins and pushed by the robbers into a blue Renault van.

The four robbers, all masked, drove off in the van — leaving a stolen articulated lorry blocking the entrance to the industrial estate.

A stolen Land Rover, with its engine still running, was found at the depot.

The robbers abandoned their van at the Tesco car park in Barking after wheeling the money into another vehicle and escaping.

No trace has been found of the weapons or the cash bags. One of the robbers was described as about 5ft 2in and heavily built.

Detective Inspector Frederick May of the Flying Squad

is leading the investigation. A Security Express spokesman said: "It is a sad fact that the environment in which we work is becoming increasingly dangerous and criminals will stop at nothing for money."

Last week, an unarmed uniformed officer, PC Clive Norman, was shot in the leg by masked men attempting to rob a Security Express van delivering to a NatWest bank in Stockwell, south London. Police are not linking the two attacks at this stage.

The latest robbery is an indication that experienced professional criminals still regard security vans as vulnerable targets.

Many of the previous generation of armed robbers have moved into the relatively safer world of drug dealing and fraud.

So far this year the Flying Squad — which investigates armed robberies on security vehicles, banks, post offices, building societies and betting shops — has arrested 28 people in connection with attacks on security vans.

Police sources indicate that while other forms of armed robbery in the Metropolitan police area are down, there has been an increase in robberies of security vans.

The Flying Squad has a 30 per cent success rate in catching robbers.

They investigated 750 armed crimes last year but the majority were not as highly planned as the Barking raid.



Anthony Neilson preparing his production of Hoover Bag, part of next month's London New Play Festival. The audience will be wired up and monitored for cardio vascular fluctuation. It is sponsored by the Centre for Cardio Theatrical Research

Party strategists unbowed by 'demon eyes' rebuke Tories will still play the devil with Blair

Michael White
Political Editor

UNAPOLOGETIC Conservative election strategists last night made plain that they will not abandon their "demon eyes" campaign against Labour despite a ruling by the Advertising Standards Authority that Tony Blair had been depicted in a "disparaging and sinister" way.

However, the authority rejected complaints, from churches as well as Labour, that the Blair ad — printed in three Sunday newspapers — had caused offence by attributing "satanic qualities" to the Labour leader.

It was a view promoted by Labour's campaign strategist, Peter Mandelson, MP, who last night called the outcome a "serious decision" that would be welcomed by voters "who

do not want abusive, negative advertising brought into British politics".

The authority told Tory HQ not to repeat the bright red "demon eyes" poster because it had not sought Mr Blair's permission to use his picture "in an adverse or offensive way" — a complaint upheld in commercial advertising in recent years.

It was the first such ruling since the authority's remit was amended in 1993 to let it pass judgement on political ads, and some senior Tories privately predicted that both the authority and the Labour Party would come to regret the precedent as a serious infringement of freedom of political speech.

Publicly Labour was delighted and the Tories claimed a "score-draw". But the Conservatives say they will continue to use the curtain and "demon eyes" device

in future New Labour, New Danger campaigning.

They cite Clare Short's "dark forces" remarks about the Labour leader's entourage to justify the Blair ad which cost them £25,000 and generated — party officials gleefully claim — £5 million worth of free publicity.

Voters can expect much more negative advertising in the weeks ahead. Labour has already clashed with the Daily Mail over its reports that Nissan car executives may withdraw further investment from the UK if Labour wins. Nissan's chief, Ian Gibson, wrote to Mr Blair saying the firm had "no negative feelings" about a win.

Last night Mr Blair challenged John Major to tell his party HQ to "clean up its act", and said the ad should never have been sanctioned. It was "naïve and vicious", Mr Blair said on Channel 4 News.

Money pours in but Tory finances remain fragile

Michael White looks at Conservative hype about being 'back in the black'

A £7 MILLION surge in donations to Conservative Party funds in the past year still leaves Tory finances in a far more fragile pre-election state than predicted before publication of the audited accounts last night.

Despite pre-publication hype to the effect that the party was "back in the black" for the first time since the 1992 election, Conservative strategists still owe over £2.5 million, mostly to local Tory associations and to companies or private individuals such as the Yorkshire textile magnate, Sir Graham Kirichan, who have made interest-free loans.

Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, said in a statement that a revenue surplus for the third year running showed "an increasing number of successful British companies and entrepreneurs" realised how important a continuing Conservative government would be.

The party was now "ready to fight and win the next election, whenever it comes", he said.

Labour this week resorted to professional telephone fund-raising to offset the expected £20 million Tory war chest, and a Media Week survey today suggests equal spending on advertising so far this year.

But the Tories still have vital advantages. Yesterday they admitted to a £615,000 deficit, which prompted Labour's campaigns co-ordinator, Brian Wilson, MP, to ask where last year's £11.4 million overdraft had disappeared to.

"The Conservative Party's refusal to reveal funding sources remains one of the great democratic deficits in British public life," he said. In fact, much of the deficit has simply been shifted from banks to private loans.

Cash-rich local associations have loaned £5.5 million, repayable on demand, which pays interest on past debts, but not capital — a "black hole" of up to £19 million mostly owed to the Royal Bank of Scotland,

whose chairman, Lord Younger, is a former cabinet minister. That debt is largely shifted elsewhere.

"I hope that these loans will end up as donations or gifts. But many associations were reluctant to give us money to put into the black hole... they have put us on probation," a senior official said yesterday.

With an income of £18.62 million in the year ending in March — up from £12.7 million last year — De Mawhinney, and his deputy, Michael Trend, MP, are bullish that they will have enough support to fight the coming election.

As usual, Tory officials are coy about sources and — in contrast to far more detailed Labour accounts due this weekend, and those of the Liberal Democrats — decline to identify individual donors, some of

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'Much of the deficit has simply been shifted from banks to private loans'

whom only surface via the courts.

Asil Nadir, fugitive Polly Peck tycoon, gave at least £400,000 which auditors have been unable to reclaim despite routine assertions that illegal funds are always returned. The hierarchy is usually successful in toughing it out.

By cutting costs of running headquarters, the party has offset past extravagances, though spending is creeping up as polling day approaches. Conferences and publicity rose from £400,000 to £1.6 million and the number of professional agents, down to a perilous 34 in 1995, is now 118.

Claims that donations in June and July have eliminated the remaining £1.9 million of bank debt recorded in the audited accounts are offset by the admission that debts of up to £8.5 million still exist.

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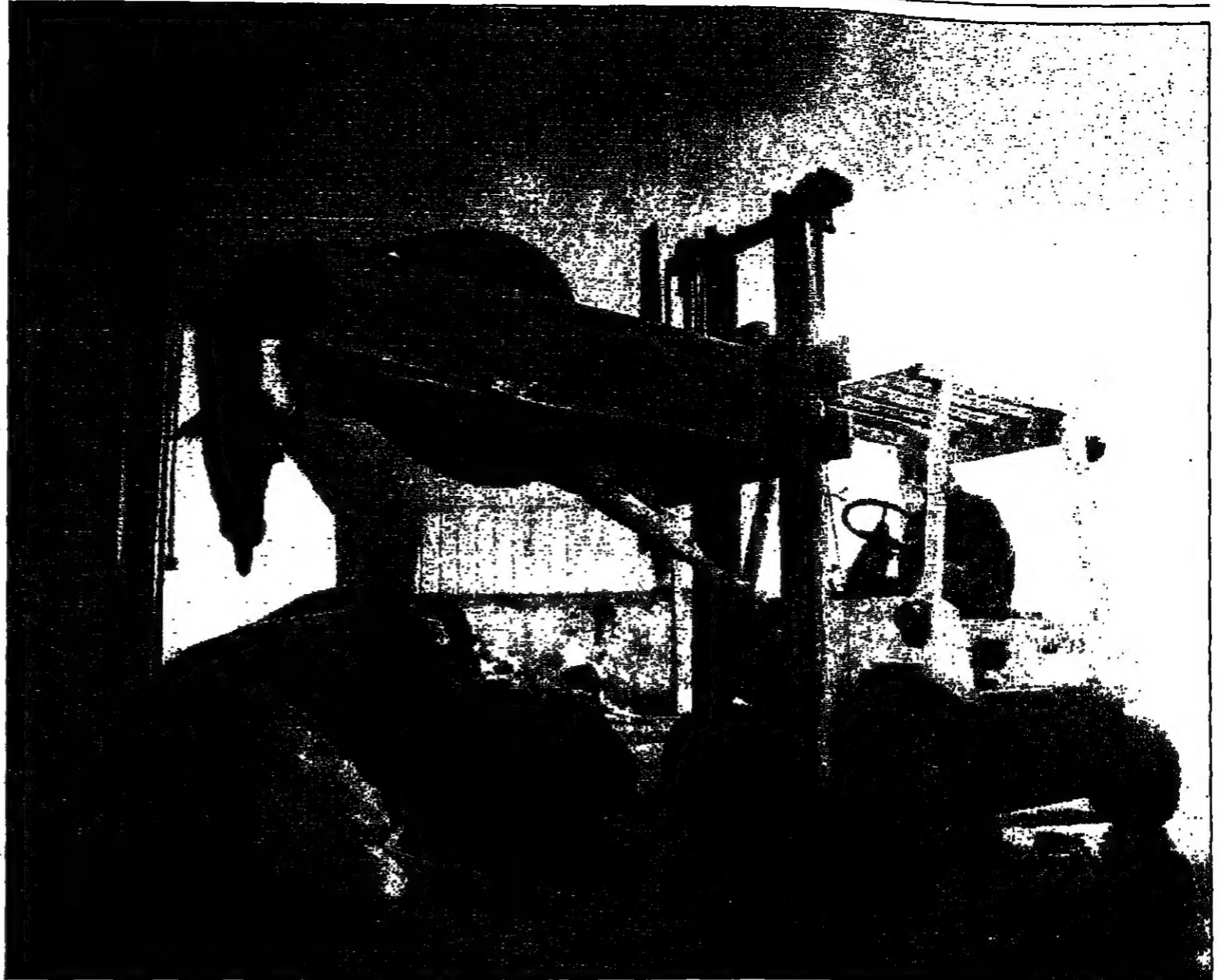
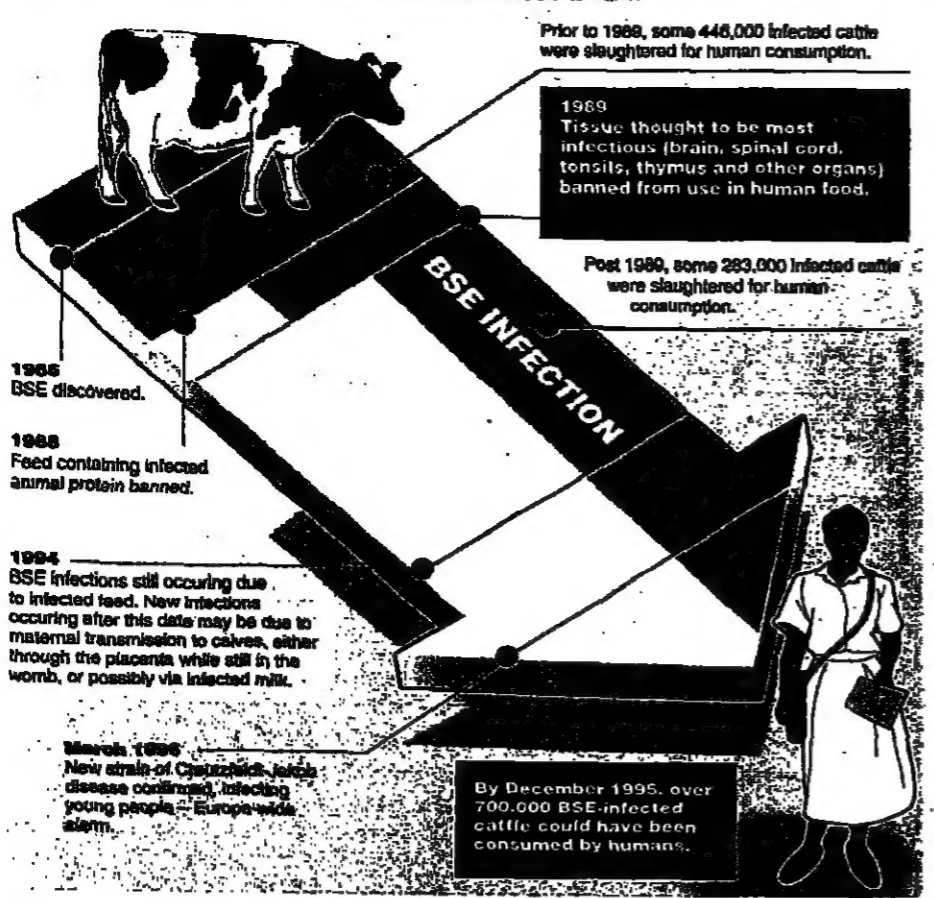
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مكتبة الجليل

Stemming the flow of infection

BSE infection and the attempts to limit its possible effect on humans.



After the slaughter... BSE-infected cattle being piled up at an incinerator, but the risk to public health still remains. PHOTOGRAPH: TOBY MELVILLE

Mad cow disease is on the wane and could die out by the year 2001, say scientists. But figures produced by their latest research could have 'a considerable public health significance'. Tim Radford reports on a new embarrassment for Government

700,000 BSE cattle 'fed to humans'

MORE than 700,000 cattle with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) may have been turned into food for humans by the end of 1995, scientists estimate today.

The figure, they say, could be of "considerable public health significance". It is also another embarrassment for the Government. Agriculture ministers and health experts claimed for a decade — and continued to claim until March 20 this year — that British beef was safe and humans were not at risk.

But now scientists on whom the Government relies for advice on the Aids epidemic confirm what opponents of the Ministry of Agriculture have been saying for at least three years: that throughout the BSE decade, sick cattle have been slaughtered for food.

An international team led by Professor Roy Anderson, director of the Centre for the Epidemiology of Infectious Disease, used techniques developed to calculate the progress of HIV infection in Britain. The team turned to BSE after the announcement of 12 cases of a new variant of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) which had close similarities with BSE. The intention was to help predict the impact of various culling policies.

What they report in the science magazine *Nature* today is good and bad news for the Government. They say

the BSE epidemic will fade rapidly; more than 90 per cent of all the victims have already fallen sick and died. They predict that — in the absence of culling — another 6,950 cases of BSE have yet to be diagnosed.

'Solid work by too few scientists with too few studies and too few animals'

needed before the disease fades towards extinction in the year 2001. But the end of BSE in cattle will not be the end of worries about human health. There have been 161,412 confirmed cases of BSE in

Great Britain since the discovery of the disease in 1986. The suspicion is that it was spread by contaminated feed — made with protein from dead cattle and sheep — and a ban on the use of that had, they say, an immediate and lasting impact.

But contaminated feed continued to infect animals until mid-1994: since then, they believe, new infections have been passed from mother to calf. The scientists calculated a mean incubation period of five years for BSE. But beef cattle are normally slaughtered within three years. So the team had to make estimates of the number of animals that might have gone to the abattoir with BSE, but not yet the symptoms.

Any infectious tissue, they

think would have been in the brain, spinal cord, tonsils, eyes, thymus and other organs. Use of these in human food was prohibited seven years ago.

About 446,000 infected animals would have been slaughtered for consumption before the specified bovine offal ban at the end of 1989, said Dr Christl Donnelly, one of the team. "If there is any risk, it is believed that those would be the most infectious tissues. Then there were an additional 280,000 after this time up to the end of 1995. That contributes about 730,000 animals to date, but of those you'd be most concerned about the ones before the specified offal ban," she said.

New and mysterious cases of CJD — in British people

much younger than normal, and following a different course towards death — shook the Government and triggered a Europe-wide alarm when they were announced on March 20. But scientists still cannot say whether these represent a new epidemic in humans. One problem is that nobody knows how infectious the predicted 730,000 slaughtered cattle might have been. Studies

of the progress of the disease take years, and are still not completed.

Dr Donnelly thinks that the infectivity of undiagnosed animals would be very low for more than half the incubation period; however, the potential to infect would then rise dramatically towards the end. "We can say that in order to substantially reduce the number of cases of BSE that we will see — 50 per cent of what we would see without culling — you need to cull a million cattle to the end of 1996."

This would also have to be accompanied by "maternal targeting" — the search for and slaughter of the offspring of cows which were diagnosed as having BSE, because most new cases, the researchers believe, will arise from infection at birth or suckling. This too is a blow for the Government: until this month, ministry officials have held that the only source of infection was by contaminated feed.

David Skegg, of the University of Otago, New Zealand, says: "The continual retreat from entrenched positions about BSE has damaged the credibility of science as well as of politicians." A look at epidemiological research so far "leaves one with the impression of solid work by too few scientists involving too few studies and too few animals. The portfolio of laboratory research has been no more timely or adequate... The BSE saga should be a warning to all countries not to skimp on research into emerging problems."

Ban on protein feed had 'an immediate and lasting impact'

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DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION: Show of party unity secures nomination as president's opinion poll lead increases

Right turn puts Clinton centre stage

Martin Walker in Chicago

HIS authority over his unified party complete. Bill Clinton's rightward march was rewarded last night with his formal nomination as presidential candidate by the Democratic Party's most liberal standard-bearers.

President Clinton was nominated by Senator Chris Dodd — the party chairman who called his welfare reform "unconscionable". Then the president's centrist political strategy was rousing defended by Jesse Jackson, Senator Teddy Kennedy and former New York Governor Mario Cuomo, the old leaders of the Democrats' supplanted left wing.

Running home Mr Clinton's determination to command the centre, party officials confirmed yesterday that he was planning to steal some more of the Republicans' ground in a speech tonight proposing to cut capital gains tax.

Mr Clinton arrived in Chicago by helicopter to a tumultuous welcome. During his slow rail journey across the American heartland his opinion poll lead had climbed back into double digits.

Arriving at Chicago's navy pier, the president was greeted by his wife — fresh from a heartening welcome by conference delegates — and vice-president Al Gore, who yesterday heard the party chant of "four more years" turn into "twelve more years".

The mood of unified triumph in a party now drilled to the president's "New Democrat" ideology was dampened only by the relatively small television audience of 34 million for the first night. Although a fraction smaller than the figures for the Republican convention two weeks ago, this was well short of the Democrats' audience four years ago.

The audience has seen a carefully-scripted television variety programme of laser shows and musical interludes, packaging a formal act of fealty by a predominantly

liberal party which has settled for a moderate leader who can win elections. The Democrats' liberal heroes bent the knee to Mr Clinton as the price for a two-hour burst of the old religion that will have to satisfy them for another four years.

"We need to have the faith to hold on," Mr Jackson told the convention, after earlier in the day counselling "revolutionary patience" at meetings where no cameras were present. "When we the people coalesce with an enlightened president, we can change America for the better."

'Clinton stands up against the radical right and the rabid revolutionaries'

"President Clinton has been our first line of defence against the New Gingrich contract, America's right-wing assault on the elderly, our students and civil rights. We must maintain with integrity the first lines of defence as they attack the integrity of the First Lady."

"He deserves four more years. He will win and deserve to win. Stand tall, Mr President," Mr Jackson concluded.

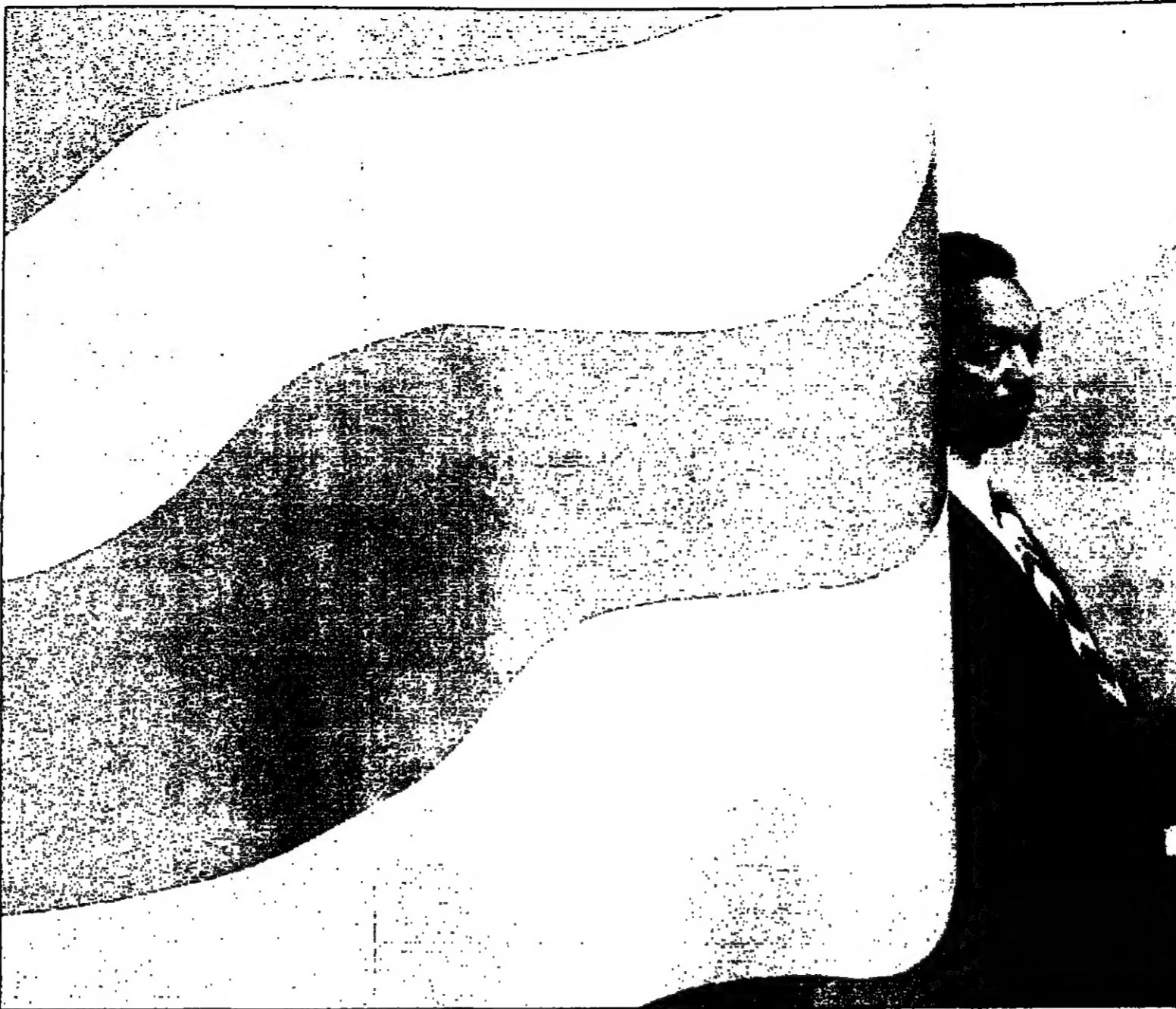
His barn-storming and emotional speech countered the war record of the Republican candidate, Bob Dole, with memories of his own father returning home from the war, required to travel in segregated trains and buses.

Mr Cuomo said that "being faithful to Democratic principles requires more than guarding the museum of the past". He praised the president for "standing virtually alone against the radical right and the rabid revolutionaries led by Newt Gingrich".

Away from the television cameras, the Democratic rhetoric has been more fiery. Mr Gore told a rally of trade union delegates: "The two-headed monster of Dole-Gingrich has launched an assault on decades of progress on behalf of working men and women."

Complaints against Mr Clinton's rightward move were intense. Ohio congresswoman Marcy Kaptur started White House aides when she introduced the president at one of the rallies with a harsh attack on the North American Free Trade Agreement. And in Chicago, Senator Frank Lautenberg said: "I am not comfortable with the party deserting some of its fundamentals."

The remnants of the left, set into the Committee on Economic Insecurity, gathered yesterday with leaders of the National Organisation of Women and Americans for Democratic Action "to discuss the revitalisation of the left".



Reverend Jesse Jackson, a leader of the party's supplanted left, waits in the wings as his son introduces him at the convention. PHOTOGRAPH: RON EDMONDS

Delegates applaud Kennedy, the new comeback kid

Jonathan Freedland in Chicago

DEMOCRATS will tonight celebrate not one "comeback kid" but two when they welcome on stage Senator Teddy Kennedy, the liberal veteran who has pulled off a political revival matched only by President Clinton's. The patriarch of America's quasi-royal Kennedy dynasty comes to Chicago relaunched: leaner, fitter and with perhaps more influence than ever before.

Once plagued by scandal and derided as a bloated, soaked example of Washington excess, he is now lauded as a legislative master, credited with all his party's recent triumphs.

Less than two years ago, Americans were ready to write Mr Kennedy's political obituary. Always in the shadow of brothers John and Bobby, his reputation was shattered at Chappaquiddick in July 1969 when a young woman companion drowned in his car.

His presidential ambitions were crushed by his failed challenge to Jimmy Carter in 1980 and he became an object of derision. Frequently the target of late-night TV comedians, he was caught up in the notorious rape trial of his nephew, William Kennedy Smith, and suffered further from revelations about his still wild personal life.

By autumn 1994, polls showed Massachusetts voters ready to eject the so-called last brother after 32 years in office. Only by running what sides concede was the "race of his life" did Mr Kennedy manage to survive that year's Republican landslide.

But just as President Clinton seemed to hear the 1994 result as an alarm, so did Mr Kennedy. He has lost weight and his suits no longer strain to hold his bulk. His face is no longer mottled crimson and reveals once again that distinct Kennedy profile.

His personal regime — rising at 6am, working the treadmill, eating fruit salad for lunch — has been matched by a new zeal for work. He was the prime mover behind last week's minimum wage rise and a moderate reform of health-

care which allows workers to keep insurance cover if they leave or lose their jobs. Perhaps the capstone of his legislative career, the Kennedy-Kassebaum health care bill — co-sponsored with Republican Nancy Kassebaum — was passed by a 100-0.

He has also taken the lead in blocking a Republican measure that would have stripped illegal immigrants of key rights, and in shepherding legislation aimed at extending aid to southern black churches hit by arson attempts.

"He's a metaphor for the Democratic revival," said Scott Southland, a spokesman for the labour department. "The guy is just everywhere."

Tonight's speech is, in part, a reward from Mr Clinton, who this year sent the senator a birthday card, now on display in his office. "Thanks for your friendship and for not losing heart when so many did," he wrote. For Mr Clinton, close ties to Mr Kennedy bring another benefit: association with the priceless Camelot mystique.

The senator attributes his renaissance to his second wife Vicki, who, he says, weaned him off his doughnut-eating, hard-drinking ways. Analysts say a climate change has created space for his old-fashioned economic populism.



Campaigning Bill Clinton strikes a Churchillian pose

Peace pits peasants against old enemy

The survivors of El Salvador's army massacres could be on the move again. Jonathan Steele reports from Guarjila

HIGH in the ravine-pitted mountains of Chalatenango, hundreds of peasants who survived army massacres, a month-long trek to international refugee camps, and years of living off hand-outs are back home and fighting an ancient enemy — mean-spirited landowners with the power to set them on the move again.

As the United Nations prepares to leave El Salvador four years after brokering peace in a civil war which left up to 80,000 dead, the land hunger which provoked Latin America's most brutal guerrilla conflict still hangs heavy on several increasingly nervous communities.

Yet they are now the exception, not the rule, according to Joaquín Villalobos, who once led the Popular Revolutionary Army (ERP), one of five groups in the combined guerrilla force, the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). "Agrarian reform isn't the biggest issue. Most Salvadoreans live in cities. They offer more jobs," he said.

The peace accords of 1992 allowed communities which took over abandoned land during the war to buy it on long-term credit. But the landowner, not the government, was to set the price.

"Some are asking for 10 times the market rate," one UN official said. "They think they have people over a barrel, because the communities have built schools, clinics and workshops, as well as their own homes."

With the December deadline approaching for the UN's departure, officials trying to complete the purchase negotiations fear landowners may try to evict the peasants. The UN is calling on the government to extend their right of tenure until the sales are made.

In Guarjila, one of the affected areas, José Angel Cerrano runs a tree-planting project to safeguard the steep eroded hillsides where peasants plant maize. Nearby are rows of houses made of concrete blocks — paid for by foreign non-governmental organisations — rather than the local wood. After seven years in a refugee camp in

Honduras, the community persuaded the UN to guarantee their safe return to El Salvador.

"We did not get all we wanted, but it was all we could," Mr Cerrano said of the 1994 election in which the rightwing party Arena defeated the political parties that had emerged from the guerrilla struggle.

Beside the so-called squatter communities, about 37,000 peasants who were tilling abandoned land have been able to buy it with little difficulty.

The Arena government is also delaying compensation payments to thousands of families of death squad victims and others who were killed in the war. While official estimates put the number of dead at 80,000, the UN-appointed Truth Commission calculated it at about 24,000, of whom 90 per cent were

killed by the government side. A later UN census reduced this to 16,000 confirmed deaths. Yet only a quarter of their widows and orphans have received any money.

Any former soldiers from both sides have found common cause in the precarious conditions of peace with high unemployment and a widening of El Salvador's already huge income gap.

The most miserable group are the thousands of war-wounded, too disabled even to turn to crime. "We're the only organisation from the FMLN which has remained united," said Juan Bautista Argueta Chiles. He joined the guerrillas at the age of 18 and, in 12 years of fighting, was wounded five times and lost a leg.

About one in seven of the FMLN's 4,750 disabled fighters are women, he said.

Civil rights groups claim that 'racist' welfare reforms target California's most vulnerable

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

CIVIL rights groups have described this week's order to remove almost all welfare benefits from illegal immigrants in California as cynical racist politics that hurt the most vulnerable.

The Republican governor, Pete Wilson, announced the cuts less than a week after President Bill Clinton signed a Republican-sponsored welfare reform act also widely criticised.

from Mexico. They include tens of thousands in menial industrial and domestic jobs, and seasonal workers brought in the harvest with the authorities' knowledge.

Pre-natal care for 70,000 women will be immediately eliminated. Also affected are retirement, unemployment, food stamps, public housing, disabilities, non-emergency health and higher education. Schooling is exempt.

Chris Schneider, a lawyer with a rural immigrants' legal service, said: "Farm workers are being used as pawns in a cynical political game. Wilson is attacking the most vulnerable in society and it makes me ashamed to be a Californian."

A civil rights lawyer, Joe Palacios said: "Illegal immigrants don't get half the benefits the governor claims they do. This is clearly a cynical political action to stir up racial antagonism in a very irresponsible manner."

Critics believe the order is racist because it requires civil servants to report anyone they suspect is an illegal immigrant. Millions of lawful residents of Hispanic origin would come under suspicion because so many undocumented workers come from Mexico or Central America.

Pentagon knew of nerve gas at Iraqi dump in 1991

Ian Katz in New York

THE PENTAGON has admitted that senior United States government officials were told as early as November 1991 that chemical weapons had been stored at a large Iraqi munitions dump destroyed by American troops.

However, the Pentagon insisted for more than four years that it had no evidence Gulf war veterans were exposed to chemical weapons.

The information that chemical weapons were stored at the dump in the southern Iraqi desert was included in a secret intelligence report distributed to the White House, the Pentagon, the CIA and the state department in November 1991.

But though the report was relayed to US military commanders around the world, the Pentagon says it did not realise at the time that US troops involved in the demolition might have been exposed to chemical agents.

It was only this spring that soldiers who took part in the March 1991 mission were told they might have been exposed to mustard gas and Sarin, a deadly nerve agent.

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Bosnia
France head
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of discontent

سكان الصحراء

The key to success in the September elections lies with the support of refugees in 55 countries. Ian Traynor reports from Ratingen

Bosnian leaders rally diaspora vote

THE LASER show dazzled, the fireworks split the sky, and President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia went looking for a victory at the ballot box that was denied him on the battlefield.

"Bosnia has survived. But it is not whole, it is not free," he said as he sought to rally a throng of tens of thousands of Bosnians behind his Muslim Democratic Action Party (SDA) before the elections in two weeks' time.

"Alija, Alija, Alija," the crowd roared as he shook hands with supporters.

However, the setting for the weekend's campaign rally was not a war-torn corner of the Balkans, but 1,000 miles from

Sarajevo in the north German town of Gelsenkirchen.

He and his advisers know that the key to victory in the Bosnian elections on September 14 lies as much outside the country as within, that the diaspora vote will help determine the result.

It is the most extraordinary, and probably the most bizarre, Western-sponsored exercise in "democracy": for every three voters in Bosnia, there will be two abroad, scattered across 55 countries.

The diaspora ballot kicked off on Sunday in Hungary and will be held in other countries over the next few days. But Mr Izetbegovic's party yesterday urged the Bosnian diaspora to boycott the vote until arguments over

rigging of the electoral lists were settled.

"There's never been a refugee election like this, nothing on this scale ever anywhere," said Jens Grimm of the Bonn office of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which is organising and supervising the poll.

Many will be voting for the president and parliament of a country they will never live in again.

Eldin Ljuzic, aged 24, a Bosnian Muslim evicted by Serbs from his native Brcko at the start of the war and now living in a refugee hostel in the town of Ratingen, near Gelsenkirchen, will be supporting Mr Izetbegovic and the SDA. He cannot go back to

Serb-held Brcko and hopes to live in the United States.

In the foyer of Mr Ljuzic's hostel, the SDA is the only party advertising itself, grounding its appeal in Muslim sectarian nationalism.

Germany is the key campaign battleground after Serbia and Croatia, which accommodate large numbers of Bosnian voters. Western diplomats and OSCE officials say the SDA is applying heavy pressure on Bosnian businessmen and refugees.

The opposition leader and former prime minister, Haris Silajdzic, has claimed that Bosnian businessmen in Germany have been coerced into bankrolling and supporting the SDA by being warned that they could otherwise be excluded from lucrative reconstruction contracts.

The OSCE expects about 1 million people to vote in Bosnia and 600,000 abroad. In Germany, 126,342 have registered to vote. Many more Bosnians here will take advantage of German arrangements allowing them to visit Bosnia for a fortnight to vote and then return.

The vast majority of the refugees are Muslims expelled from the 49 per cent of Bosnia under hardline Serb control. Until Tuesday, when the municipal part of the ballot was shelved by the OSCE, they were being asked to vote, in effect, for "governments-in-exile" in their native former Muslim majority areas.

As a continuation of the war by other means, the poll risks triggering fresh confrontation by polarising communities.

Josipa, a liberal Croat from Muslim-controlled Travnik in central Bosnia, holds all the

nationalist parties in contempt. She had hoped to retain her residence rights in Travnik but, on a reconnaissance trip, found she was on the brink of having to forfeit her property and pension rights there.

Enraged, she is voting for the first time for the Croatian nationalist HDZ.

The sentiment is shared by the Muslim exiles who regard opposition to the all-powerful nationalists as a sign of weakness and, possibly, treason.

"We don't want a Muslim country, but we need to vote SDA to get a state," said Mr Ljuzic's wife Jasna, aged 23.

"Later on maybe we can have different parties, but now it has to be the SDA or we will

be stateless, like the Kurds." Already, before the poll, all parties are accusing the OSCE in Germany of discrimination so that they have a tailor-made protest if the outcome is not to their liking.

Bosnia's first free elections in November 1990 put Mr Izetbegovic and his more extremist Serb and Croat counterparts in power and the country on an ethnic collision course.

"Whatever happens in these elections, it won't help," said Nermin Banujevic, a Bosnian businessman in Düsseldorf. "The people in charge everywhere are just firing things up. It will be total chaos and could result in more war. Maybe not as bad as before, but still..."

'Now we must vote for the SDA or we will be stateless, like the Kurds'

France heads for autumn of discontent

Paul Webster in Paris

FACED with a repeat of the industrial unrest which rocked his government last year, the French prime minister, Alain Juppé, called his ministers together yesterday to draw up urgent measures to head off a wave of strikes and internal government criticism.

The franc was hit after co-ordinated warnings by trade union leaders of a "hot autumn", adding to gloom reflected in an opinion poll in the economic daily, Tribune, showing that 75 per cent of the electorate expected paralysing strikes similar to those last November and December.

Teachers were the first to announce a protest for next month or early October, but all seven leading private and public sector unions will meet on September 10 to plan repeats of last year's street demonstrations.

The Communist Party leader, Robert Hue, who refused to join marches last autumn, said he would be at the forefront of all campaigns after the holiday season. Nicole Notat, the secretary-general of the Socialist-led CFDT union, who was accused of undermining worker solidarity during the public transport stoppages, said her supporters were ready for mass action.

Schools and public transport are again expected to be at the centre of demonstrations over wage freezes, social security cuts and unemployment. The same factors which brought cities to a standstill 10 months ago.

Farmers, traditionally Gaullist supporters, have also said they intend to back anti-government moves because of falling prices.

The private sector, which shunned last year's unrest, has already held protest marches against a succession of redundancies in industry.

With unemployment running higher than in most European Union states at 12.5 per cent, France is preparing to shed about 150,000 jobs in the next two months, adding to the 3.3 million out of work and making a nonsense of President Jacques Chirac's election promise to make job creation his priority.

As last year, the president has distanced himself from the coming confrontation while saying he will remain loyal to his minister despite Mr Juppé's falling opinion poll rating. At a weekend meeting at the presidential

holiday residence on the Mediterranean, he told Mr Juppé it was his responsibility to bring the economic and political crises under control.

But he refused to allow Mr Juppé any latitude in his rigorous budget policy aimed at preparing France for a joint EU currency. Austerity measures introduced to meet this target are key causes of recession in both public and private sectors.

Meanwhile, Mr Juppé's Gaullist predecessor, Edouard Balladur, has taken the lead in calling for a shift in economic policy. He publicly appealed for more flexible economic policies in an article in Le Monde that was considered to be the joint reflection of an influential rightwing lobby determined to see Mr Juppé replaced.

Left with the problem of maintaining budget economies while coming up with promised tax cuts before the 1997 general elections, Mr Juppé appeared to use the meeting with ministers to appeal for loyalty in an attempt to head off an internal government rebellion.

A major controversy flared up over the government's immigration policies yesterday when the CFDT's Air France branch said it would try to prevent the expulsion of illegal immigrants from Tunisia, Niger and Zaïre on a plane chartered from the state-owned airline.

The CFDT union said it had learned of a government request to charter one of the state-owned airline's planes to fly illegal immigrants home back to Tunisia, Niger and Zaïre and called the plan "a fresh violation of human rights".

CFDT's Air France branch is intervening immediately, at all levels of Air France management, to prevent the airline's planes and staff from being used in such police operations, the union said in a statement.

CFMADA, an organisation looking after immigrants, said the government was planning a second flight on Wednesday to Mali and Senegal. Leading human rights activists, including dissident former bishop Jacques Gallet, joined in, asking pilots to refuse to fly the deportees.

The government's handling of the illegal immigration issue has become a hot topic since last week's police raid on a Paris church that had been occupied by some 300 Africans in a protest against France's tough immigration laws.



Olga Osterova, aged eight, from Druzhny in Belarus, is fitted with a wig in Seattle during a stay with an American host family as part of the Children of Chernobyl programme. Olga, who lived near the nuclear power station after the disaster, lost all her hair when she was four. PHOTOGRAPH: ROBERT SORBO

Fears growing for health of jailed Nigerian human rights activist



Beke Ransome-Kuti: Alone in cell for 23 hours a day

A campaigner for the tens of thousands held for years in appalling conditions without trial now shares their prison. Patrick Smith reports

Suffering from loss of appetite and persistent night chills, Dr Ransome-Kuti's weight is about 7st 12lb. His wrists are swollen and there are rashes on his hands and back.

His daughter and her uncle, Koye Ransome-Kuti, a former health minister, were not allowed to take blood for tests.

At the beginning of this month, Ms Ransome-Kuti was allowed to see her ailing father for only 15 minutes. Her uncle, who now works for the World Bank in Washington, was not

permitted to visit him at all.

Dr Ransome-Kuti is under tremendous psychological pressure: he is being kept in solitary confinement for 23 hours a day in his cell on death row at Katsina jail, about 800 miles from his family in Lagos. The authorities have refused to allow his doctor to examine him, although prison doctors have been unable to diagnose his illness.

The chairman of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Richard Bourne, described the charges against him as "trumped up" and wants the Commonwealth ministers to highlight his case and those of Nigeria's other "prisoners of conscience".

"Beke should be released at once. He is clearly a patriotic Nigerian trying to establish democratic rights in his country," he said.

Human rights groups and diplomats strongly criticised last year's military tribunals which convicted Dr Ransome-Kuti, Gen Obasanjo and his deputy, General Abacha Musa Yaa Adaa. All the hearings were in private and the defendants had no access to independent legal counsel.

Most of the defendants

were military officers accused of plotting a coup against Gen Abacha. Dr Ransome-Kuti and four journalists were accused of helping the plotters and they are all classified as prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International.

A team of investigators for the United Nations secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was not allowed to see Dr Ransome-Kuti or Gen Obasanjo in May, although they were allowed a brief meeting with Mr Abacha.

Dr Ransome-Kuti has played a key role in Nigeria's human rights movement.

He established the Commonwealth Initiative for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR) in 1989 and did much to publicise the plight of tens of thousands of Nigerians held in jail for years before their cases came to trial.

Last October the minister of internal affairs, Behegana Kingibe, acknowledged that there were at least 70,000 such cases and promised swift action.

The CDHR has also highlighted the appalling prison conditions of which Dr Ransome-Kuti is now a victim, and publicised cases of the chronic malnutrition and rampant disease that afflict most prisoners.

Recently Dr Ransome-Kuti had established the Campaign for Democracy, which called for the recognition of the 1993 elections, won by Mr Abacha, and a national conference to draw up a new federal constitution.

A Nigerian human rights group said yesterday that four members of a recently banned university union had been arrested. The Constitutional Rights Project said the four were arrested on Monday night at the northeastern Tafawa Balewa University.

David Borenburg in Johannesburg

SEVEN former South African police generals are to be subpoenaed today to appear before Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation Commission in a development which could lead to a confrontation between the commissioners and the former president P. W. Botha.

The summonses signal the start of an aggressive phase of the inquiry, which is trying to detail and determine responsibility for the atrocities of the apartheid era.

Archbishop Tutu yesterday invited the public to submit questions which might be used to cross-examine the party leaders.

Last week, the Nationalists and the Africa National Congress were among the parties to make formal presentations on their part in the apartheid struggle.

The former president F. W. de Klerk offered an "apology" for apartheid, but denied that the National Party had authorised atrocities committed by the security forces.

This has left the security force commanders in a difficult position, since they need to establish political motivation to claim amnesty from the commission.

The worst excesses of the so-called "dirty war" in defence of apartheid were committed under Mr Botha's presidency. He also appointed many of the generals expected to be implicated by the commission.

But Mr Botha, who has been sulking in his coastal home since he was ousted as party leader by Mr De Klerk in 1990, has rejected appeals from his successor to collaborate on the National Party's defence to the commission. He may be subpoenaed himself after the generals' testimony.

The seven police generals to be summoned include three former national commission-

ers. They will be allowed to testify in camera; previous statements have indicated the direction their evidence is likely to take.

General Johan van der Merwe, the most recent commissioner among them, has said security forces - including state assassination squads - acted under direct, as well as implied, authority and that senior cabinet members were kept fully briefed, on occasion personally congratulating operatives. He has also warned that, if politicians do not make "full disclosure", the security forces will do it for them.

The trial of Eugene De Kock - a policeman nicknamed "Prime Evil" who has boasted that he was apartheid's "most efficient assassin" - is likely to add to the pressure on the commanders for full disclosure.

Earlier this week, he was convicted on 89 charges, ranging from fraud to six counts of murder. The crimes included the murder and attempted murder of several black colleagues in his assassination unit to stop them "talking".

Sentencing was postponed until September 16 for argument in mitigation. Defence lawyers have said they will claim diminished responsibility, arguing that he suffered "post-traumatic stress syndrome" after serving in the Zimbabwe and Namibia bush wars.

But De Kock, who has said privately that he will present evidence which will force the prosecution of a least six generals, will almost certainly testify that he acted on orders and identify who issued them.

After sentencing he is likely to apply to the truth commission for amnesty. His success will depend on whether he convinces Archbishop Tutu and his colleagues that he has made full disclosure.

The commission is facing pressure to broaden the scope of the inquiry to take in the role of the judges in enforcing apartheid.

News in brief

Iran demands extradition

Iran has asked Germany to extradite the former president Abolhasan Bani-Sadr, who said at a Berlin trial that Tehran organised the murders of opponents abroad, the federal justice ministry said.

Mr Bani-Sadr, who lives outside Paris, is to give more testimony at the trial on September 5. - AP.

Fingertip clue

A suspected mugger whose fingertip was bitten off by a

man he allegedly tried to rob in the Netherlands was identified by a print taken from the disconnected digit and arrested, police said in Amsterdam yesterday. - AP.

Reverse shooting

Gunsman fired on an outdoor cafe in Istanbul with automatic weapons yesterday killing four people, including a part-time bodyguard for the foreign minister, Tansu Ciller, in an apparently underworld vendetta, the Anatolia news agency reported. Seven people were wounded in the attack. - AP.

Now you can have your cake, chips and anything else you fancy, and eat it, without consuming an ounce of fat.

David Bradley

OnLine G2 page 13

The politics of hijacking

Does granting political asylum reward crime?

THE CRIME OF hijacking has been fiercely denounced over the years by many governments, including Britain. One should not, it is said, give in to hijackers' demands or offer concessions which might encourage others to try the same ploy. The demand of the Iraqi hijackers, now being questioned by police, might not appear to pose an immediate problem. They were more than willing to surrender to British justice on British soil, and presumably were aware that this could lead to prosecution and a possible jail sentence. They were not asking for anything right now in return. Yet any eventual granting of political asylum would still reward their original action; the issue does not go away just because it is postponed.

It is right to rule out returning the hijackers to Sudan. Britain has no extradition treaty with Khartoum, and there is serious doubt as to whether they would be dealt with by proper legal process — or simply be passed on to Baghdad for a more summary and extreme verdict. But this does not dispose of the dilemma which they now present. The Home Secretary could, in theory, announce, as a general principle, that anyone convicted in a British court of hijacking will not succeed in a subsequent application for asylum. But this would be contrary to natural justice and prevent the examination of such applications on their merits which the principle of asylum requires.

The greater good of the cause?

The strange tale of Mr Major's Damascene conversion

AS THE OLD Greek proverb nearly had it: beware Conservative Party chairmen bearing gifts. What the less deferential, sparkier local parties have wanted for years from the leadership is a greater say in the party's affairs: more chance to determine what goes on at conference, far fuller and more accurate information on how the party's money is spent, and a greater right to participate in crucial decisions like the choice of a party leader. What Central Office wants from them is their money and a much greater readiness to subsume their local preferences for the greater good of Conservatism. Already, loans from prosperous constituencies have enabled the party to reduce its dependence on help from convenient sources like the Royal Bank of Scotland; how much more convenient if it could get its hands on this money as of right. Already Central Office leans on local associations to adopt the kind of candidates which bolster its image; how much more convenient if some way could be found of blocking the kind of counter-productive candidates they have often preferred in parliamentary by-elections to Central Office's favourite sons (or more rarely, daughters).

Initial suggestions that some trade-off may be on the way have concentrated on the daughters. The Prime Minister, it was reported, was determined that the party should do something about the very low proportion of women selected for safe or winnable seats. On present trends, the largest number of

establishing a bizarre principle that an attention-grabbing crime is more likely to win entitlement to asylum than a quiet arrival in this country. It also raises difficult questions of hierarchy. Opponents of the regimes of Saudi Arabia or China or Indonesia or Nigeria, and a number of other dubious regimes, should also expect to be waved through in the same manner — but we know that the present government treats some of these very differently.

The answer to this unfairness is to cast the net wider rather than discriminate between the victims of Britain's totalitarian friends and foes. But that does not dispose of the particular issue of hijacking. As the passengers' evidence now reveals, this was by no means a non-violent hijacking — if such a phenomenon were possible. Next month or next year, another such incident could occur with a less peaceful result; another in-flight struggle with a security officer, for example, could lead to weapons being fired and death for all on board. Might we not then conclude that this incident should have been handled more toughly?

These are all self-evidently difficult questions with no easy solution. The only firm ground on which to stand is that of the law. Those against whom there is sufficient evidence of participation in hijacking should be duly charged. Asylum is a different matter, and is subject to the provisions of the 1951 Geneva Convention. This excludes anyone who has committed "a serious non-political crime outside the country of refuge prior to his admission to that country as a refugee." Does that apply to those who hijacked the Sudan Air Airbus? Their cases remain to be argued. In the meantime, no one should encourage expectations that an application for asylum, in these or similar circumstances, would necessarily gain a favourable answer.

women MPs the Conservatives are likely to muster after the next election is 22, where Labour expects to have 90. A similar problem surrounds the selection of candidates from ethnic minorities — which is no doubt why John Taylor, whose candidacy at Cheltenham occasioned so much trouble in the 1992 election and may have contributed to the loss of the seat, has put paid to his hopes of fighting a winnable seat and settled instead for a place as a working peer. Maybe to correct those imbalances, the local parties could be given just a touch of the additional power and influence they aspire to?

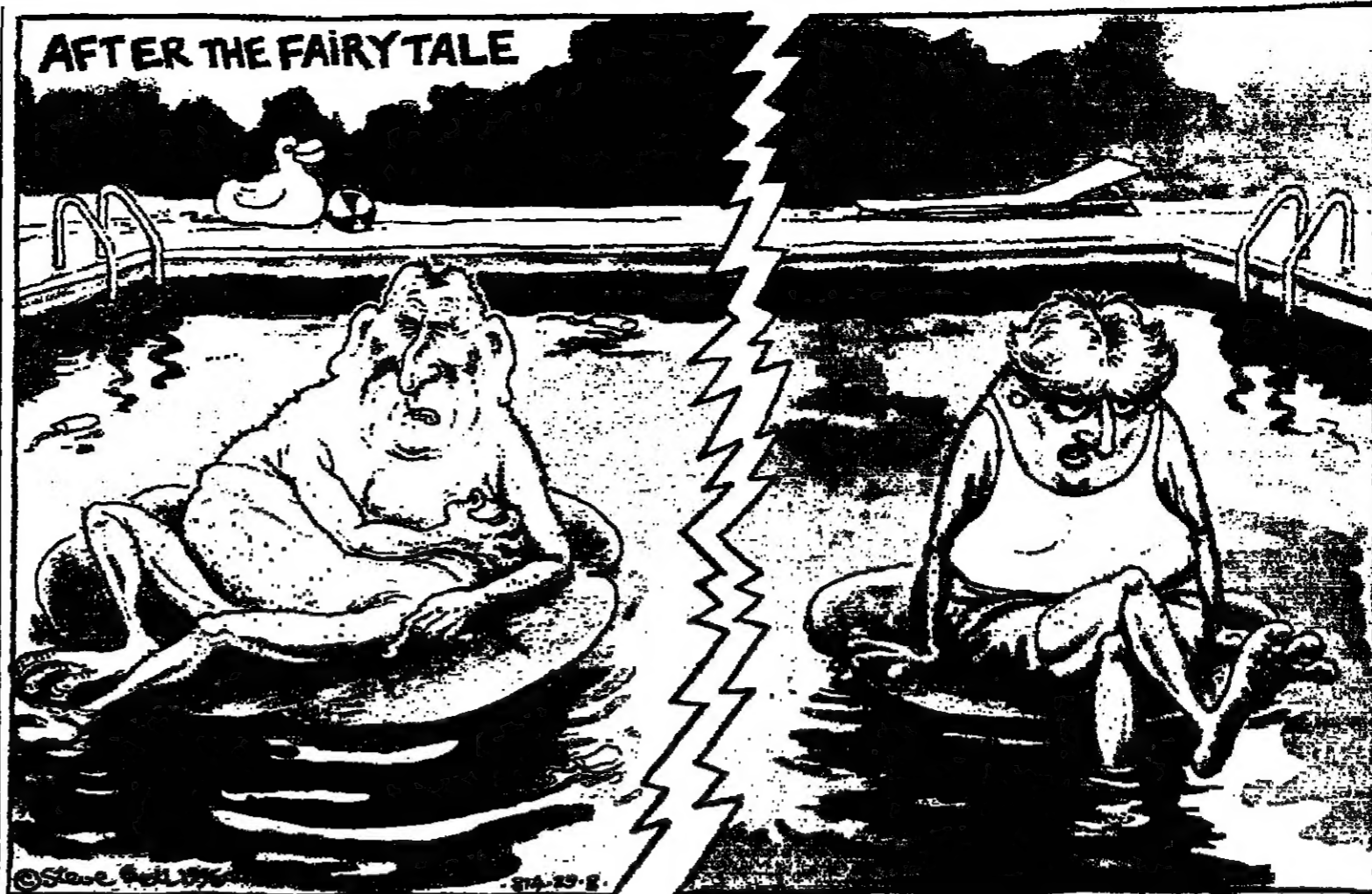
It may be a sign of grace that these matters worry the Prime Minister, but his chances of intervening must surely be nil. We have only to recall the obloquy he, his associates and his friendly newspapers poured on the Labour Party when it sought to redress the gender balance by devices like all-women shortlists. We shall have no truck with such heresy, the Conservative Party cried — its women members (reputed to be the most formidable opponents in many constituencies) to the selection of women candidates) included. Let women succeed on their merits, not by artificial devices which limit local choice! Let the party never succumb to social engineering and the dictates of political correctness! How, after that, could the leadership try to force women candidates on local parties which want to field men? They could never be so hypocritical, could they?

Dance to the music of our time

Even the best fairy stories don't have happy endings

AS THE royal marriage ended yesterday the Prince of Wales was with his children at Balmoral, the Princess with the English National Ballet. A slightly curious choice, one might think, when so many traditional ballets celebrate princes who wed princesses — or even beautiful commoners — and live happily ever after. But that is a view of ballet which prevails among people who never go to it. Ballet today evokes a far wider range of human emotions and human predicaments; even those where the prince and princess fall out of love or, in time, can no longer stand the sight of each other.

For every prince who, as in Britten's Prince of the Pagodas, is rescued by true love from life as a salamander, there are several whose relationships founder because, as Princess Diana famously complained in her interview for Panorama, there are three in the marriage. Sometimes the prince aban-



Letters to the Editor

God save the monarchy

IF THE monarchy is to survive, adaptations and fundamental changes will have to take place (Support for monarchy as leader of Church falls, August 28; Survival plan for monarchy, August 29). The British people are overlooking entrenched institutions and judging them from an informed base.

They look to the Established Church and find exclusivity and hypocrisy; they look to government and find self-seeking, dishonesty and corruption; they look to the law and find justice with a million interpretations, driven by wealth and power; they look to education and find political bias, incompetence and stupidity; they look to the monarchy and find privilege, affluence, and financial reward for disgraceful behaviour.

The United Kingdom has anticipated world trends in democracy, global expansion, industrialisation and female emancipation, and is now creating a society without limits, spiritually, ethically, sexually, geographically or individually. The task is to create acceptable moral precepts which inspire adherence not because of punishment, either hereafter or now on Earth, or because of reward — but because they are "right".

Holiday cash-in

LET'S have more bank holidays, but have them privately financed through sponsorship. Keith Wright (Letters, August 28) gives proof of Sainsbury's gains, which cost the company nothing thanks to government subsidies in declaring the holiday. I was in Helidon Bridge on Monday and Yorkshire Water also had a similar unfair pecuniary advantage from the gallons that always pour from the skies on August Bank Holiday. Conversely, perhaps, ice-cream makers would offer money to eliminate bank holidays.

WHILE some countries do allow a day to be taken off in lieu when a public holiday falls on a Sunday (this year Luxembourgers, for example, were given the Luxembourg Grand Duke's official birthday), Britain is, I think, alone in having holidays which do not celebrate anything. I am thinking, in particular, of Not May Day, Not Whit Monday, and, of course, the one which started the whole nonsense, August Bank Holiday.

YOU refer to the Peabody Trust's tradition of housing London's "respectable" poor (Charity keeps Tory lord in 1-bed flat, August 28). The trust, as London's largest housing association, has only two sets of criteria for the letting of its 14,200 homes in the capital: severe housing need, and limitation of income, as the trust is a charity for the relief of poverty in London.

number of receptive nations, support worthy causes, provide magnificent (but terribly expensive and empty) spectacles does not inspire allegiance. If the behaviour of the royals is little better than that of greedy film stars, justifiable republican thoughts crystallise.

THE bishops seem to have forgotten that the Church of England was invented, and the Sovereign became its Head, as a result of a royal divorce. Surely they are not recommending Henry VIII's other favourite play ... execution?

THE sound and fury of last week's media coverage surrounding the Way Ahead Group's proposals failed to address the concern that the Crown should be accountable to Parliament and subject to the rule of law.

T S Eliot's tinker (and his cuss)

IF T S Eliot was claiming authorship of the Ballad of the Dirty Tinker, I don't think he would be being naughty. That particular piece of rudery was made use of by Kipling in a story published in 1898, taken from Anon, in which an important verb was changed to "kissed".

THE version known to me starts: "The lady of the manor was dressing for the ball/When she spied a dirty tinker leaning kindly 'er the wall." The bit you quote goes (I follow Kipling's amendment to the verb): "He kissed them on the stairway and he kissed them in the hall/ Lord help us!" cried the butler. "Has he come to kiss us all?"

YOU should remember that the Green Party is a decentralist organisation (Green Party to consider withdrawal from election, August 27). All local parties are autonomous and our national council does not have, or intend to use, any authority to "tell" them whether they should, or should not, stand in the general election.

the House of Windsor self-sufficient, the monarchy would have successfully entrenched royal prerogative powers in the hands of a body outside parliamentary control — and free of financial censure.

In reality, such a proposal is an insult to our democracy. The House of Commons is the proper venue for any debate into the financing of the House of Windsor and we would urge that such a debate take place during the coming session of Parliament.

I AM sure that the people of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will be relieved to see that they need not join with the Guardian (Leader, August 28) in agonising about the future of the Prince of Wales. He is, after all, only waiting to be "King of England". At a stroke, you have removed that worry, although the Welsh may be surprised that their Prince will not be their king, and the Scots may wonder why the killed Prince now at Balmoral will not reign over them.

Students meet a Korea counsellor

YOUR leader (How to scale the Korean wall, August 21) raised apparent doubt about the Republic of Korea's will to see the divided Korean peninsula unified.

THESE tedious men-women debates, which seem to carry on ad infinitum, can probably only make matters worse. Can't we just decide that we are all human beings trying to make the best of our lives, which may or may not include the sex of our friends.

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Another debate about blokes and birds (more particularly, a Raven)

GIL JOYSMITH'S understandable irritation (Letters, August 28) at being dismissed as a mere man by Charlotte Raven (What women don't want, August 28) misses the most objectionable aspect of her article — her lack of concern for children.

Raven writes that "single mothers, after all, are only bad news when they're poor and irresponsible, never when they're rich and brave." This is nonsense. Most single mothers are not single mothers by choice; they are widows, divorcees, victims of domestic violence or women deserted by their partners. They deserve support not because they are single but because they are mothers.

WHAT makes Charlotte Raven's own assumption that men need women, especially her kind? Steve Day, Douland, Yelverton, Devon PL20 9LN.

A Country Diary

LOCH NESS: Red squirrels have few predators in the Highlands although occasionally no doubt a fox or wildcat catches one off guard. Several people have claimed that pine martens have wiped them out in some areas but there is no evidence to support this, and it is more likely to be fragmentation of woodland by housing or clearance. Road casualties are a problem but recently there was a much more unusual casualty on the south side of Loch Ness.

THE late lamented J G Anderson (the "Erotic Potter of Waterbeach") used to sing about The Highland Tinker, a ballad in the genre of over-the-hill masculine conceits, like Barnacle Bill the Sailor. It had several verses and far better rhythm than the version you print.

LOCH NESS: Red squirrels have few predators in the Highlands although occasionally no doubt a fox or wildcat catches one off guard. Several people have claimed that pine martens have wiped them out in some areas but there is no evidence to support this, and it is more likely to be fragmentation of woodland by housing or clearance. Road casualties are a problem but recently there was a much more unusual casualty on the south side of Loch Ness.

sexual equality is, regrettably, a long way away but nothing useful can be gained by continuing to persecute men and women as distant and mutually antagonistic groups.

CHARLOTTE Raven's views, if expounded by a man about women, would have brought to mind that old chestnut "male chauvinist pig". They would be considered racist if the word "man" was substituted by a member of an ethnic culture.

THESE tedious men-women debates, which seem to carry on ad infinitum, can probably only make matters worse. Can't we just decide that we are all human beings trying to make the best of our lives, which may or may not include the sex of our friends.

For whom the green light shines

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COMMENT AND ANALYSIS 9

Diary
Matthew Norman

FROM the Isle of Wight County Press comes news — astonishing news — of last Wednesday's Seaview Regatta. As John Carter reports, the sun shone, everyone had fun, and Jessamy Hardie, four, came third in the sand-castle competition. What an enchanting bucolic idyll it all sounds. But wait... what is this? "Adela Botomley — daughter of National Heritage Secretary Virginia — eventually won the Tolly Bombardier Challenge Cup after three play-off sildes against Vanessa Hunt." Begins a reference to some arcane practice on a mysterious "greasy pole". For what follows, I beg you to brace for impact. "Adela, 14, opened the contest. A seamstress, "a Pamela Anderson look-alike with inflated breasts..." Oh my God. Although Adela soon discarded her false (indeed, without them, and to her credit, she went on to "pip cousin Charity Gerson" in a diving competition), psychologists will agree that there is no way of predicting what long-term scars of inadequacy, if any, may be left. Peter Bole, kindly did return our call yesterday but purely to refuse to comment, while a nervous Heritage press office was equally reticent. The Diary is silent too: the truth is, I am too shocked for words.

A NEW political slogan, a natural successor, some will feel, to the endlessly witty "I Like Ike" has hit American politics. It comes from Chicago, host city to this week's Democratic convention. A caller from the town to the radio show of the "shock jock" phone-in host Rush Limbaugh yesterday announced: "We have a saying here in Chicago... 'the women of Chicago like their Dick Daley.'" Mr Limbaugh, an ultra-right winger with a shibboleth for Democrats like Chicago mayor Richard Daley, sounded oddly embarrassed, and mumbled something about being sure he knew what she meant.

F EARS mount that a mad woman is on the loose pretending to be my caring friend (she is not, most certainly) Esther Rantzen. Replying in a Monday newspaper to an assault upon her by a BBC colleague the day before, the real Esther wrote: "The attack in the Sunday Telegraph was unprecedented... I was given absolutely no advance warning before it was printed." This is very odd indeed, since the article was heavily puffed in Saturday's Telegraph. Esther herself was unaware of this, of course, but the impostor saw it and spent much of Saturday on the phone failing to get a "right to reply" in the same issue. Who she is, this Rantzen wannabe, and what she's up to, no one knows. Please God, she can be stopped before she harms the real Esther's reputation.

A ND a warm "Blat out" to all of you who noticed that the BBC reporter in question, the excellent John Wars, was called Martin by yesterday's Diary. You will also have noticed that the mistake occurred in the same sentence as the phrase "skop journalism". This, we feel, makes it not a crass mistake, but a clever piece of irony.

I N response to a long-running row about traditional pub names, the brewer Greenalls has renamed one of its Nottingham pubs "The Samuel Morley". Mr Morley was a Victorian MP and businessman (as the brewery is well aware); he was also a ransacking teetotaler who struggled valiantly all his adult life to dissuade people from alcohol (as perhaps the brewery is not). Rumours that Greenalls is to rename its Arnhem Road pub "The Reverend Falley" are thought to be mischievous.

C HORTLE to learn that all the letters forming the name Liam Gallagher, new analysis and absentee Oasis singer, can be rearranged into the bilingual phrase "I'm a foul-mouthed Mancunian twat with a passion for cocaine". They cannot, in fact, but let this set the sun on suggestions of humorous anagrams and hilarious spell checks all the same.



Campaigners become enemies of the state

Commentary
George Monbiot

THERE was an invited guest at the street party organised by traffic protesters in Brighton last weekend. An inspector with the Metropolitan Police's Forward Intelligence Team, he seemed to know rather more about the rest of the guest list than the organisers did. Before the party began, local police conferred with him, then darted into the crowds to pull out known activists. Only when the officers stopped raving on the inspector's advice and started picking up people who just looked as if they might be involved did they start making mistakes — one of the 80 people arrested was a man handing out leaflets about Dianetics.

The inspector was well-placed to know who to grab. His unit has been monitoring environmental protesters all over the country. In June and July it used a house opposite the London offices of Reclaim the Streets to watch activists' movements. Whenever any-

one left on a bicycle, a car and a mountain bike would follow. When the campaign's minibuses pulled out, four cars took off behind it. Six weeks ago, the Forward Intelligence Team raided the office and removed its computers.

Environmentalists subjected to crude observation of this kind say they find it terrifying but not particularly alarming. They are far more concerned about the sort of surveillance that is often suspected but seldom proved. As the action campaigns develop, they are accumulating more and more evidence to suggest that environmental protest is becoming the state's "necessary enemy", replacing miners, communists and terrorists as a justification for lavish spending on domestic intelligence.

It is easy for campaigners to get paranoid, to imagine a spook in every gathering and a bug on every phone. The direct-action movement seethes with rumours, some of which have only the most tenuous connections to reality. But a combination of announcements and leaked reports from police bodies, changes in practice and the occasional slip-up suggests that the notion that peaceful environmental protest is becoming part of a job-creation scheme for spooks is more than just a figment of over-wrought imaginations.

In March, the Association of Chief Police Officers, while admitting that no terrorist offences by greens have taken place, and failing to furnish any evidence to suggest that they were likely to occur, decided to start using the Anti-Terrorist Squad to gather intelligence on environmental activists. Already, even the most law-abiding greens complain they are being made to feel like potential bombers. During the Big Green Gathering at the end of July — a sort of gymkhana or county show for environmentalists — police used powers granted by the new Prevention of Terrorism Act to strip-search people coming on to the site.

At the end of 1994, Special Branch announced that it was changing its priorities to concentrate on environmental activism. Earlier this year, Contract Journal carried extracts from a Special Branch report, suggesting, again without accompanying evidence, that environmental activists might be preparing for "suicide attacks" on road builders.

To avert this and other peculiar possibilities, the report had identified 1,700 campaigners. During the McDonald's libel trial, one of the company's vice-presidents testified that Special Branch had been passing him information about potential protesters.

In court last year, activists who had planned a demonstration against an open cast mine near Leeds asked a

police officer how his force had managed to arrive at the protest site before the protesters. He replied that the police had found the details on the Internet. But neither the date nor the location had been posted on the Net — these details, the activists believe, could only have been obtained by bugging or infiltration. Several campaigners complain of hearing previous conversations played back to them when they pick up the telephone, or getting through to Group 4 headquarters while trying to phone a friend.

Already, even the most law-abiding greens complain they are being made to feel like potential bombers

future activities than past misdemeanours. At Newbury, private detectives have been filming people at art exhibitions and noting down conversations in pubs. Even so, campaigners claim that this sort of surveillance alone cannot account for some of the information included in the 100-page dossiers issued this month by the Department of Transport to support injunctions against them.

ers, being "a large number of persons in pursuit of a common purpose", now qualify for MIA's attention, under the terms of the new Security Services Bill. Whether or not this will make much difference remains to be seen. During the IRA ceasefire, while the monitoring of domestic subversion should have declined sharply, the number of warrants for phone tapping approved by the Home Secretary doubled.

Were there evidence that green campaigners had become a genuine terrorist threat, all this attention would be justifiable. But environmental protest in Britain is avowedly non-violent. Campaigners routinely break the laws designed to contain them, such as the aggravated trespass and trespassary assembly provisions of the last Criminal Justice Act, and sometimes commit obstruction, a breach of the peace or even criminal damage. But that's about as far as it goes.

To apply the tactics of counter-terrorism to people organising openly on behalf of popular causes is about as measured a response as using 80 horses and 30 hounds to kill a fox. In a sense it is a great compliment to the effectiveness of a comparatively small number of people. But, as well as providing work for unemployed spies, this surveillance is also a deeply worrying indication that the state is so ill at ease with itself that it can brook no questioning of its wisdom.

But the ability to challenge the state's authority, reclaiming politics from the politicians, is good for the state, as well as society. Society is like an amoeba: it moves from the margins, not from the centre. Cut off from its margins, the state can only sclerotise and shrivel, becoming ever less responsive to change. Heterodoxy and subversion are the ushers of progress.

Your life is still in your hands



Meg Henderson

BEMUSEMENT was the first reaction to videos of operations being sold in the High Street. Then came wonderment that such films would find a market, and finally outrage that our NHS bills and ailments should be used to enrich entrepreneurs in the entertainment industry. Well, grisly films will find a ready market — there really are people out there like that. Besides, we must remember that the company producing this novel approach to family entertainment was also behind that other "educational" film, depicting executions. How shocking, went the theory; let's see it again in slow motion, just to be sure. This time round a spokesman for the company was quoted as saying that the idea of making money from what are essentially training films for student doctors came from the medics concerned in the original filming. You know, those kindly, caring, 20th-century Gods we entrust with the wellbeing and lives of our nearest and dearest, as well as our own.

case that a great many of them come from similarly afflicted parents. What they tend not to have is experience of normal life. Indeed, one of their greatest handicaps in dealing with the majority of their patients is the class divide. They see a great deal of suffering, but they don't necessarily experience it.

The picture, I'm told, is changing, but most doctors still come from different social backgrounds from the mass of their patients; they have been raised and live in areas where money isn't a problem; they are used to better amenities and a higher standard of living; and they often don't speak the same language, even if both think it's English. The product of this social and cultural divide is an acceptance by both sides that doctors know best — the traditional paternal role of the medics supported by both sides. This is reinforced by the projection of the God-like aura, useful for stopping possible dissent in its tracks. Not to mention an untold number of legal actions for medical negligence, malpractice, or (as we are beginning to call it) medical accident. But it works against the doctor as well as the patient. It is, for instance, unrealistic and unfair to believe that doctors never make mistakes; trust me on this one. I have witnessed many. When they do, it isn't always because they are hopeless, or have murderous intent; most are genuine mistakes by very fallible human beings. Instead of hounding some unfortunate medic through the courts and the press, it would make sense to have a no-fault compensation system. What we have is the medical profession closing ranks to protect the bad as well as the good, thereby dumping the innocent victim: the patient. All in their best interests, you understand.

I have no idea if this is true, though I wouldn't be surprised, and the courts will decide if these deeply offensive videos should be sold. But there are matters arising that need to be addressed. What we have is the medical profession closing ranks to protect the bad as well as the good, thereby dumping the innocent victim: the patient. All in their best interests, you understand.

The main problem with doctor-patient relationships is that all the power has traditionally been grasped by one pair of hands. As patients we willingly let the medics make all decisions, from what is wrong to why and what can or will be done. The perceived wisdom is that medics know best; they have a vocation, after all, to heal us. Yet the only people who believe that are the general public, and doctors make liberal use of this innocent, misplaced faith when it suits them. Being an ex-medical myself, I know better.

Let me tell you a truth secretly acknowledged only by medics: Doctors are just people like the rest of us; they are not Gods. They have a living to make, they have family problems, mortgages to meet, garage bills to pay, golf clubs to join and boats to buy. Get close to them and you find a rather immature set of individuals who have gone to school, then to university and into hospital life. It is still the

BOTH sides need to grow up. Patients have to get up a game with the knowledge that their wellbeing is their own business. You don't accept the first quote; it's your life, you have the right to ask questions, request explanations and require your doctor to come up with available alternatives, not just the preferred one. And doctors have to divest themselves of that handy aura they hide behind, and stop behaving like prima donnas when confronted by patients who exercise their rights.

That is how it works when medics themselves become patients. Medics patients would never find their innards exposed on video for the enjoyment of sad creatures prepared to pay for the "pleasure". There is another alternative, of course. Go private. Meg Henderson is the author of Finding Peggy (Corgi)



Unite against Baghdad

Britain must help the Iraqi hijackers in search of asylum, and ignore those Tories calling for their return, argues Emma Nicholson — for we have done little to curb Saddam's tyranny

commented privately last year, it has become difficult to distinguish between the actions of the Iraqi Kurds towards each other and those of Saddam's armies against them. The tragedy of the Turkish Kurdish community has blurred the picture internationally and may have cloaked from time to time the marauding Iraqi army's actions around Iraq's northern safe-haven. The bitter pill for those countries such as the United Kingdom who initiated and still support the safe-haven, has been the sight of Barzani and Talabani fighting each other as opposed to moving against Baghdad.

these communities are bedeviled by a singular lack of cohesion and aims. Turning again to the battle against apartheid, the Iraqi opposition would do well to study the African National Congress (ANC). Despite their difficulties, which are being aired now in front of Archbishop Tutu and fellow members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, they form a model which the Iraqi National Congress (INC) would do well to study. Whenever they are living, members of the ANC put the aims of the organisation above their tribal grievances. The destruction of apartheid and one-man-one-vote (one-woman-one-vote) in South Africa were their goals — which they have achieved. A modern miracle created by consistent, united work.

determined the shape of modern-day Iraq, with its awkward and unwieldy three-part mixture of the independently minded Kurds, the non-political and hard-working majority group of Shi'a in the South, and the Ottoman-Empire-backed Sunni, the minority to whom the British gave power in the 20s. Yet, despite our great knowledge of Iraq, from which seems to stem the Edward Kennedy view that Iraq is a European problem, the British Government chooses to stand aside and watch and photograph while the historic marshlands of Mesopotamia were destroyed.

IN THE wake of the Iraqi dissidents' hijack of a Sudan Airways passenger plane and its consequent drama on British soil, it is timely to examine both the British Government's response to this potential tragedy and to the vast, continuing disaster that is Saddam's Iraq. None of us knows who the hijackers are nor whom they represent, but it seems likely that they are high-ranking officials, probably from Saddam's army or even his notorious Republican Guard. How else could they have been allowed to leave Iraq together with their families? Even some of his most long-serving diplomats are forbidden to take wives and children with them outside the borders of Iraq. Their families are held in safety conditional upon the travelling members' return. Such relative freedom to travel in entire family structures can only mean one thing: these men were close to Saddam Hussein himself and their defection and agonised pleas for them and their families if they were

This Iraqi opposition inability to have a clear focus and a single aim has dogged their efforts to dislodge Saddam for years. Surely one form of opposition, and by far the strongest, should come from the very large Iraqi communities now sheltering in the region and the West. The United Kingdom harbours perhaps 65,000 Iraqi refugees. France has a smaller number, as does Germany. The Europeans' volume of Iraqi refugees shrinks in comparison with the 645,000 who have gained a safe haven in Iran, where I assist 90,000 to survive through the Amar (Assisting Marsh Arabs and Refugees) appeal.

Of course, it could rightly have been expected by all and sundry that the British Government would have taken a lead political role. After all, Iraq was a British protectorate. It was the British who

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Abram Games

Graphic images for war and work

ABRAM Games, who has died aged 82, was one of the last great British poster designers...

unforgettable. His must have stuck in many people's minds as vividly as they did in mine.

Later on he sometimes chose a broader treatment: a Keep Britain Tidy road sweeper, a Top Person in a top hat...

Abram Games was born in Whitstable. His father was a Latvian photographer, his mother a Russo-Polish seamstress.



War-time ATS poster (detail)

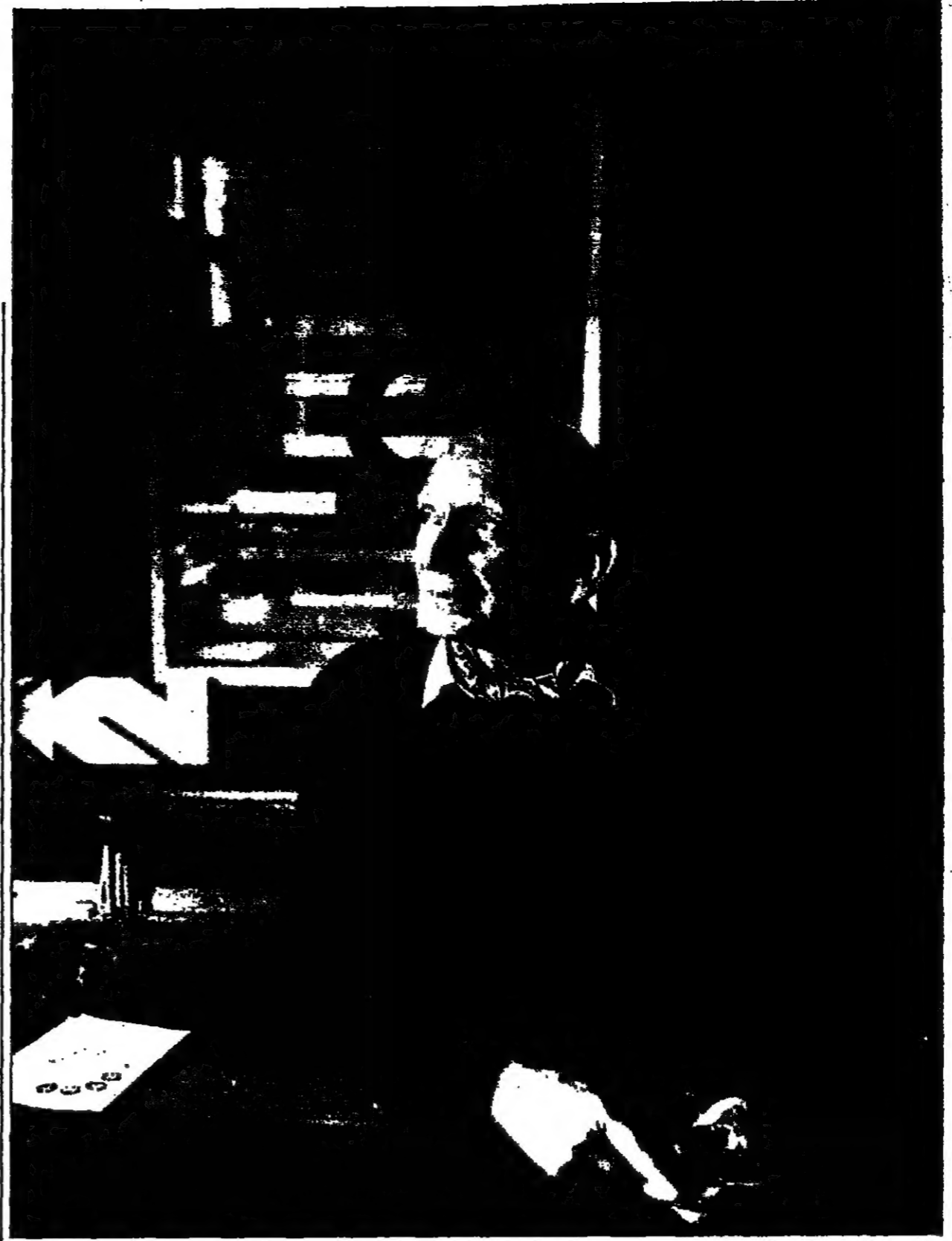


Festival of Britain logo

was popular in the best sense, and was probably his most widely known single work.

Germany and A M Cassandre in France, and an English tradition that included E McKnight Kauffer and Ashley Havinden...

As a person he was friendly, considerate and encouraging, as a teacher he taught me in my first year at the RCA.



'I don't think he would have made a design that was subversive.' Graphic designer, Abram Games in 1990. RUPERT CONANT

ers, but no longer as a professional. The liveliest posters are often opposed: Television has taken the punch out of commercial posters...

distortions, the visual tricks that Games played with paint, are now done routinely and anonymously on computers.

profession. And he was lucky — and clever — in contriving, over a long and creative working life, to keep on doing what he did best.

devotion. They had a son, Daniel, and two daughters, Sophie and Naomi. His companion and friend in later years was Peggy Epstein.



Italian job... Fisher as Turandot with James Johnston at Covent Garden. HULTON

Sylvia Fisher The voice of Gloriana

WHEN Sylvia Fisher, who has died aged 86, appeared as Beecham's heroine in Covent Garden on December 3, 1948, nobody would have guessed that this was the first time she had ever stepped on to the operatic stage.

during which loneliness had frequently made her feel like returning home. She was always a person of melancholy and pessimistic disposition, even at the height of her success.

Régine Crespin a more sensuous one, but Sylvia Fisher was the most convincing in portraying the pathos of the woman finally renouncing her younger lover.

news came through of President Kennedy's assassination, so what should have been a celebration dinner in her London home afterwards became an occasion for grief as we sat at table watching the events in Dallas being shown on television.

Birthdays Lord (Richard) Attenborough, producer, director, chairman, Channel 4. 73. Sir Evelyn de Rothschild, merchant banker, 65. Dame Mary Douglas, first woman Lord Mayor of London, 75. William Friedkin, film director, 57. Elliott Gould, actor, 38. Thom Gunn, poet, 57. Lenny Henry, comedian, 38. Marmaduke Hussey, former chairman, BBC board of governors, 73. Michael Jackson, rock singer, 32. Tony Newton MP, Leader of the Commons, 52. Dick Spring, deputy prime minister, Republic of Ireland, 46.



Jackdaw

Step one: wear napkins on faces, bandit-style. Step two: all shout in unison, 'hands up for lager!'

Step nine: receive and eat curry — it is essential that large quantities of rice remain untouched.

Curry favour

Step one: wear napkins on faces, bandit-style. Step two: all shout in unison, 'hands up for lager!'

for investment, for reputation creates its own demand. 6. Spend money on proper glassware, and never serve wine in small glasses.

Erotic front

IT WAS 4pm on the 13th floor of a hotel in Paddington when I discovered waistbands. He was scanning the horizon line, mist piling off St Paul's but my view was a radiator and an inch-and-a-half thick strip of elastic waistband.

side stretching my leg. I rolled over to face a body, again out in half by the thinnest drawing string waistband on a pair of off-the-shoulder trousers.

High Times

DANIELLE — Cannabis dealer Age: 30 Area: South London I'm a single mother with two boys, both under six, and I've been living on the social. I get £36.40 a week — and it doesn't go anywhere. Dealing gives me a quality of life that I couldn't get from doing anything else.

make me say it all belonged to my boyfriend Marcus. In the end they charged me and the babysitter and I got bail because of me and the kids.

Cow corner

THE GERMANS tough stance against BSE surely hit rock bottom this week with a store cancelling orders for top quality prize cattle manure — because it came from Wales! The store, which takes 12,000 bags of the manure a year

from Major Homefrey (he owns a farm in the vale of Glamorgan), made the move when the consumers discovered where the manure was coming from.

Emily Sheffield

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713-4368; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 115 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Jackdaw — Cannabis dealer Age: 30 Area: South London I'm a single mother with two boys, both under six, and I've been living on the social.

Flying high in Sky

Flying high in Sky. The next morning they went round to his house. They found drugs and asked him whose they were. He said they were mine. He's only a kid. They came and arrested me. Down at the station they were trying to

EU ex Dividends fall as Man's broken

Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

EU exports cut trade gap

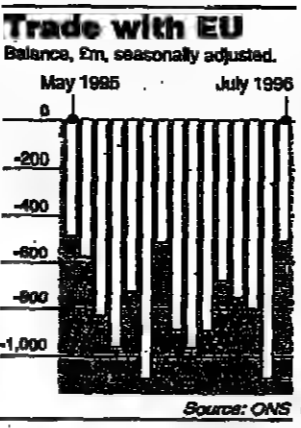
Pick-up dispels City anxieties

Richard Thomas
Economics Correspondent

SURGING exports to the Continent have fuelled a pick-up in the UK's trade performance, dispelling City fears that a buoyant high street would send British spiralling into the red.

After a summer of upbeat figures on inflation, borrowing and unemployment, Treasury ministers welcomed news of a narrowing trade gap as a sign of new competitiveness among exporters.

The demand — and in particular consumer activity — will have an adverse impact on the trade balance.



proved, with the deficit down to £506 million against £1,090 million in June. On a three-monthly basis, ONS officials said, the trade picture was "broadly flat", with the whole-world deficit at £3.6 billion between April and June, only marginally up on the £3.5 billion recorded in the year's first three months.

But some economists warned that the subdued import demand could be a reflection of a large stock overhang in British factories, with firms meeting demand from stockrooms, rather than overseas orders.

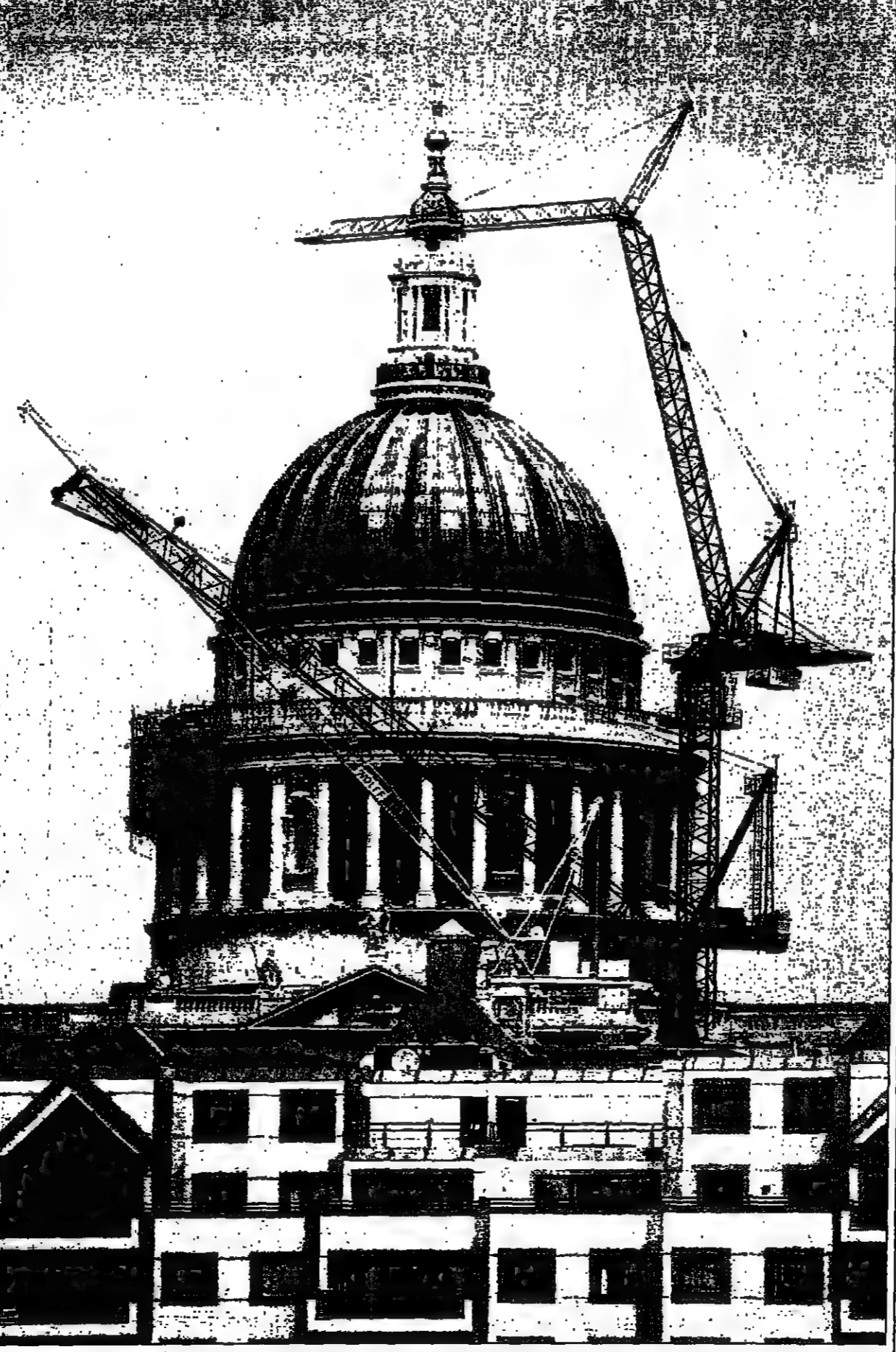
Dividends will fall as Hanson is broken up

Roger Cove

THE demerger of Hanson, the formerly high-flying conglomerate, will cost £95 million — but will leave shareholders worse off as the dividends of the constituent parts will fall well short of the group's recent payouts.

There can be no assurance that it can be operated profitably as a stand alone company. After the demerger the company will have to meet all of its cash requirements through funds generated internally from operations and external borrowings (which may be more costly), the statement says.

MILE EYE



The dome of St Paul's rising above the smoke provided an enduring image of the Blitz. Only the ever present cranes obscure today's view from the south bank of the Thames in David Sillitoe's photograph for our series of City Images

Bureau opens more secure route to buying via the net

Nicholas Bannister
Technology Editor

THE race to realise the commercial potential of the Internet heated up yesterday when UUNET Pipex launched what it claimed to be the first really secure payment service.

Farmers reap healthy profit as Dairy Crest shares surge

Tony May

SHARES in Dairy Crest Group, formerly the manufacturing arm of the now defunct Milk Marketing Board, surged 27 per cent to 196p on their first day of trading on the London stock exchange.

Lloyd's rebels given another week

Pauline Springett

THE embattled Lloyd's of London insurance market yesterday launched a last-ditch effort to eliminate the remaining opposition to its £2.3 billion rescue plan, informally extending the deadline for acceptance.

Richard Rosenblat, chairman of the American Names action group said he thought the extension was a tactic to discourage rebels from continuing to litigate.

He also said that Lloyd's was informally extending its deadline for Names to accept the rescue package because it did not have sufficient numbers in favour.

He also said that Lloyd's may have deferred acceptance of their offer in the light of the Virginia court judgment last Friday and the subsequent US Appeals Court ruling in Baltimore last night.

Notebook

Disentangling the conglomerate myth



Edited by Alex Brummer

AMONG the reasons that demergers have become so fashionable is that they make it easier for investors to understand the dynamics of a business.

caped the sharp-eyed Hanson managers at the new Imperial. As well as equipping themselves with share option schemes which will yield 150 per cent of basic salary, their contracts protect them from takeover with a poison pill which would provide twice the annual salary plus other benefits, including pensions.

Trade puzzles

WHEN sterling was dumped out of the ERM four years ago, two facts became common currency. First, that inflation would take off. Wrong: prices remain stagnant. Second, that the benefit to exporters would wear off.

By nature the chemical industry is highly cyclical and Millennium — with its heavy dependence on polyethylene, will be no exception. Nevertheless, shareholders will hardly be prepared for the tough judgments on Millennium included in the information documents in line with SEC requirements.

Buffett debut

AN EXCITING moment for the normally sedate Eurobond markets: the London debut of the investor Warren Buffett.

missed the claim last night as "absolutely unjustified", saying the matter had largely been settled by international arbitration in 1982.

Iran sues Siemens for failing to complete nuclear plant

Industrial Staff

INCREASINGLY rocky relations between Iran and Germany worsened yesterday when it emerged that Siemens is facing a multi-billion pound claim for damages from Tehran over its failure to complete a nuclear power plant.

The industrial plant is facing claims for more than 8 billion marks (£3.6 billion) in compensation over the abandoned plant in the southern port of Bushehr.

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Austria 15.67	Germany 2.250	Malta 0.580	South Africa 6.50
Belgium 45.67	Greece 35.75	Netherlands 2.5025	Spain 186.40
Canada 2.07	Hong Kong 11.71	New Zealand 2.18	Sweden 10.11
Cyprus 0.89	India 56.53	Norway 9.7275	Switzerland 1.78
Denmark 6.650	Ireland 0.5225	Portugal 225.50	Turkey 125.225
Finland 5.9170	Israel 4.87	Saudi Arabia 5.78	USA 1.190

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

Pearl of Avon on the market

WEAALTHY oyster lovers who don't mind a spot of hard work are being given the rare opportunity to buy their own oyster-farming business. Ill health has forced Peter Lewis to call it a day and put Avon Oysters, one of the West Country's best known producers, up for sale, writes *Geoffrey Gibbs*.

The business, one of only 20 oyster farms in England, produces up to 5,000 oysters a week and is also involved in the processing and marketing of mussels and other shellfish bought in from local rivers.

Produce, treated at the company's purification plant, is sold to wholesalers, retailers and fish restaurants around the country. Turnover slipped last year after Mr Lewis became ill, reducing profits from £25,000 to £20,000.

The farm is now cultivating one million Pacific Gigas oysters in bags laid on metal racks in the tidal estuary of the River Avon.

Included in the £170,000-plus price tag are a seafood bistro and retail outlet as well as the shellfish purification plant and the million oysters.

PHOTOGRAPH OF OYSTER FARMER GILVY LLOYD-JONES BY TIM CLIFF



Cockburn sanguine at first loss in 204 years

Outlook

Roger Cowe

A 204th year of trading at 15 Broad Street is probably not the way new chief executive Bill Cockburn would have wished to begin his period in charge. But Mr Cockburn, who came from the Post Office and therefore knows a bit about turning loss into profit, was unshaken yesterday.

And quite rightly so. The loss announced yesterday is the legacy of those 204 years, especially the past few years, when the remnants of the Smith family failed to solve the high street chain's longstanding problems, and were allowed to do so by an excess of debt and a shortage of talent in the people they employed.

To be fair, the £26 million loss is the sort of figure which tends to suggest a new chief executive, being the consequence of a strategic review and the resulting collection of closures, disposals and redundancies. Exceptional costs add up to £18 million, mostly for writing off stocks and closing office properties, but also for several hundred redundancies announced earlier this year.

Losses of £10 million will also be incurred on selling businesses, such as the stationary operation which was one of the old group's last failed diversifications, and its share in DIY chain Do It All, one they made earlier.

Even before all that, however, the group's half performance was pretty poor, as Mr Cockburn acknowledged yesterday. Operating profit from the continuing businesses fell from £127 million to £116 million, with the main high street business the main culprit. Elsewhere, Virgin Our Price (of which Richard Branson's empire owns a quarter) improved dramatically, as did Waterstone's book shops, while the group is also beginning to make money from newsgroups in hotels and airports in the US.

Mr Cockburn pointed to the second-half performance as evidence of improvement throughout, but even in that period the main UK retail chain made less profit than in the same period last year.

Action has already been taken to overcome the stagnant sales and plunging profits of a chain which at one time seemed to have as strong a position in the high street as Boots The Chemist, but

which has seen its market more seriously eroded by the supermarkets.

A new management team has been recruited, the final number of which will be announced in the next few days. The organisation has been transformed to try to win down profit responsibility. Head office staffing has been reduced, and so have the product ranges stocked in the shops, with the number of videos halved and the number of book titles cut by a third. There will be more space, which can be used for better merchandise display, but the company still has to resolve with what, if not clutter, it should fill the stores. Over the years, it has tried travel agents, computers and various other whimsies. Now the focus is a "Children's Discovery" area and an Express department for shoppers in a hurry.

There is a long way to go, as Mr Cockburn admitted. "It will take at least three years", he said. "We are changing the habits of a lifetime."

He likes mountaineering analogies, suggesting the group is "in the foothills of the Cairngorms" but loaded with supplies, strategy, maps, guides and energy with which to reach the peak. But Mr Cockburn will also know that there are plenty of pitfalls, even without the unhelpful attentions of competing mountaineers.

Highly paid architect signed up to design new Citibank headquarters at Canary Wharf

Foster doubles his salary

Ian King and Sarah Whitebloom

Sir Norman Foster, the world-famous architect recruited to design Citibank's new headquarters in London's Docklands, has more than doubled his salary in the last year.

The accounts of Sir Norman's company, Foster Holdings Ltd, show that he received a salary of \$487,294

— against \$209,994 the previous year — in the year ended April 1995.

Foster Holdings, in which Sir Norman holds an 80 per cent stake, reported a 21 per cent jump in pre-tax profits to £1.2 million during the period.

News of 61-year-old Sir Norman's bumper pay packet coincides with his appointment to design Citibank's new \$300 million UK corporate head office at Canary Wharf. Citibank, which has de-

cidated to bring a number of its London offices together at the new building, has so far said that Canary Wharf is the "preferred site".

However, spokeswoman Kathryn Carassalini said Citibank expects to complete contractual negotiations on the deal within two months. The bank expects to begin occupying the 300,000 sq ft building towards the end of 1999.

The appointment is the latest high-profile project involving Sir Norman, who is

now designing a 1,000-ft skyscraper in the City of London for Kvaerner, the Norwegian shipping and engineering group.

Citibank would not say how much it is paying Sir Norman, whose other recent accomplishments include designing the new Hong Kong airport, or why it had selected him above other architects.

Ms Carassalini said yesterday: "Sir Norman has worked with us for several months on the design of the building."

Citibank, the second-biggest bank in the US, will base 2,500 of its 4,000 British staff — mainly working in banking and capital markets — in the new building.

It is the latest financial institution to scrub the City in favour of Canary Wharf. It joins ESW, Bear Stearns and Morgan Stanley there, and competition between Docklands and the City to woo other firms remains intense.

Citibank made the decision to relocate from several of its

existing office premises last year, as part of a cost-saving reorganisation.

Ms Carassalini said Canary Wharf had received the nod over another rival site, thought to be in the City. "We were quite open minded as to whether we moved into something already there or whether we built something. Both the short-listed sites fitted the criteria we had set, but in the end it came down to the price of the Canary Wharf site."

In demand from France to Japan

Sarah Whitebloom and Ian King on the popularity and passion of Sir Norman

ALTHOUGH some of his colleagues, such as Sir Richard Rogers, may have a higher public profile, Sir Norman Foster is one of the leading figures in world architecture.

There appears to be scarcely any large project in which he has not had some hand. He has been reshaping the Reichstag in Berlin, creating plans for Hong Kong's new and controversial \$2 billion airport, designing the world's tallest building in Japan and the massive bridge over the Gorges du Tarn in southern France — and working on a new look Wembley Stadium. Past projects in-

clude the space-age Stansted airport and the controversial Cambridge law library.

The 61-year-old former council worker and national serviceman has come a very long way from his Manchester working-class roots.

They may not be to Prince Charles's taste, but his glass and steel structures have made him the world's most sought-after — and possibly the richest — architect.

So extensive are his commitments that Sir Norman — whose hobbies include the less-than-relaxing pursuits of skiing and flying the office jet — is said rarely to take a break, although this week he



Powerful vision... Sir Norman Foster's design for Wembley Stadium in the 21st century

is on holiday. Despite his appetite for work there have been questions asked about just how much of his burgeoning workload Sir Norman is able to control. Around 250 staff are now employed by his partnership in order to tackle the firm's commitments.

While it would be impossible for him to take on everything, the architect superstar insists that he checks everything done in his offices.

The twice-married architect seemed to epitomise the

Thatcherite 1980s. He built bigger and taller towers such as the Hongkong & Shanghai Bank's headquarters — cathedrals to finance for the age of international money.

Fittingly, he received his knighthood in the 1990 honours list, just as the UK construction industry plunged into recession.

Of course, he has his detractors, and one leading architect said yesterday: "He is obviously highly regarded. But he is extremely thorough,

exact and difficult to work for. He's most architects."

For others in Sir Norman's profession can have received so many plaudits for their work and be in such international demand. So popular has he become abroad that overseas earnings now account for the vast majority of his partnership's income.

Three-quarters of the firm's \$16 million turnover in 1995 came from the Far East and continental Europe. The UK contributed just \$3 million.

Sir Norman is also a passionate spokesman for architecture and a founder trustee of the Architecture Foundation, which aims to promote excellence in the profession.

Headed by Sir Richard Rogers, the group includes figures such as the BPC's Alan Yentob, Baroness Blackstone, Independent Publishing editor Andrew Whitman-Smith, and Sheila McKee, former director of the housing charity Shelter.

News in brief

Stena loses £55m as competition hots up

FIERCE competition in the English Channel has led to first-half pre-tax losses of \$86 million (\$54 million) for the Swedish ferry company Stena Line.

The company said that prices had fallen in the peak season because Burlington halved its charges in July on Le Shuttle, the tunnel rail link. It also blamed the late delivery of two ships and operational difficulties. — *Keith Harper*

400 new jobs at Tyneside yard

MORE than 400 new jobs will be created at a Tyneside offshore engineering yard which has become part of a major Norwegian company, it was announced yesterday.

The purchase by Aker Oil and Gas Technology of a 70 per cent stake in McNulty Offshore Services at South Shields will result in the doubling of the existing 450 workforce.

Finance director David McNulty said: "In the past, we have only been able to build but with Aker we will be able to undertake bigger contracts." — *PA*

BA ends Mediterranean row

BRITISH Airways intends to stop flying three unprofitable Middle Eastern routes, serving them instead through a franchise agreement with British Mediterranean Airways. The agreement ends a dispute between the two airlines since BA resumed services to the eastern Mediterranean in early 1995.

British Mediterranean's jets will be painted in BA's colours and its cabin crew will wear BA uniforms. BA said the pact begins on October 27 when it will drop services to Damascus, Amman and Beirut. — *Bloomberg*

Johnston's ad sales optimism

JOHNSTON Press — whose purchase last month of Emap newspapers for £205 million made it the UK's biggest regional newspaper group — sees signs of a pick-up in the advertising market.

Announcing a jump in half-year profits from £8.1 million to \$12.6 million, executive chairman Fred Johnston said the recent improvement in retail sales was beginning to be reflected in the advertising market. The group had also benefited from the recent decline in the price of newspaper after two years of increases. — *Ecob*

0990 29 29 29

Smart Class
not Club Class

£35
easyJet

Amsterdam

Underside

Dan Atkinson

Poor old Lloyd's just can't shake asbestos. Not only has the insurance market taken an Atlantic-sized bath on claims against the fallen wonder-substance, but now it finds the stuff parked on its doorstep. Workmen spent the long weekend beaver away on a development in Leadenhall Market; come Tuesday morning, one health and safety inspector informed them the junk they had been piling up on the street was the dreaded A-thing. The site has now been closed while readings are taken to measure asbestos levels.

WHEEL out all the old cracks about the collapse of the Roman Empire — Covent Garden PR man Victor Trocki, the one-time commodity whiz turned publicity entrepreneur, is ministering to a brand-new client: a horse. Mr Trocki sort of inherited the hoofed one when he was engaged by its owner, the eponymous telephone-card company, but by the time of Easycall's appearance at York last week Victor was a true believer. Two-year-old Easycall won his first three races (at Leicester, Newmarket and Goodwood) by an average three and a half

lengths. Victor faced and rang buddies throughout the Smoke urging hefty stakes on the performance at York, only to see Easycall take an uncharacteristically laid-back approach to the course and amble in fourth. He's been banished to the gym (the horse, not Victor) to get back on form for September. And strictly no more of those oat-rich lunches with his PR man.

BLAST from the past (1): Channel 4's expose a week ago of the real causes of the 1978 Concorde disaster was worth watching for one priceless period film clip. The scene was Tehran, where a British delegation was desperately trying to flog Concorde to the Iranians. And who was that sleek-suited politico smarming up to the Shah? Shameless old (young) Hesse.

BLAST from the past (2): The ERC had better shape up if it wants that £100 licence fee. Tuesday night saw out of this World swallow (nearly) whole a ludicrous tale of computer-screen messages from the dead. Aside from the technical errors (the Beeb declared there had been neither Internet nor E-mail in the mid-80s), nobody seemed to notice the marked similarities between this "true" story and a highly entertaining 1979 potboiler called The Saxonbury

Printout (Phil Smith; New English Library).

AS THE property market agents return to their equilibrium state (total unavailability). Proof comes with a communiqué from Knight Frank, headed "Goodbye Mr. Chips", a document that waxes eloquently, to mourn the decline of private boarding schools. But, hey, there's always a silver lining, and Knight Frank says plenty of old schools are now coming on to its books, while those facing closure seek cheaper premises. "Clearly any such options would be preferable in many cases to the staff, parents and children than seeing a much loved... school close," drives spokesman Rupert Sweeting. "Realising the most from these property assets is where specialist knowledge of the market plays an important role." In Mr Chips's day, written English of that standard would have earned Master Sweeting a painful encounter with the cane.

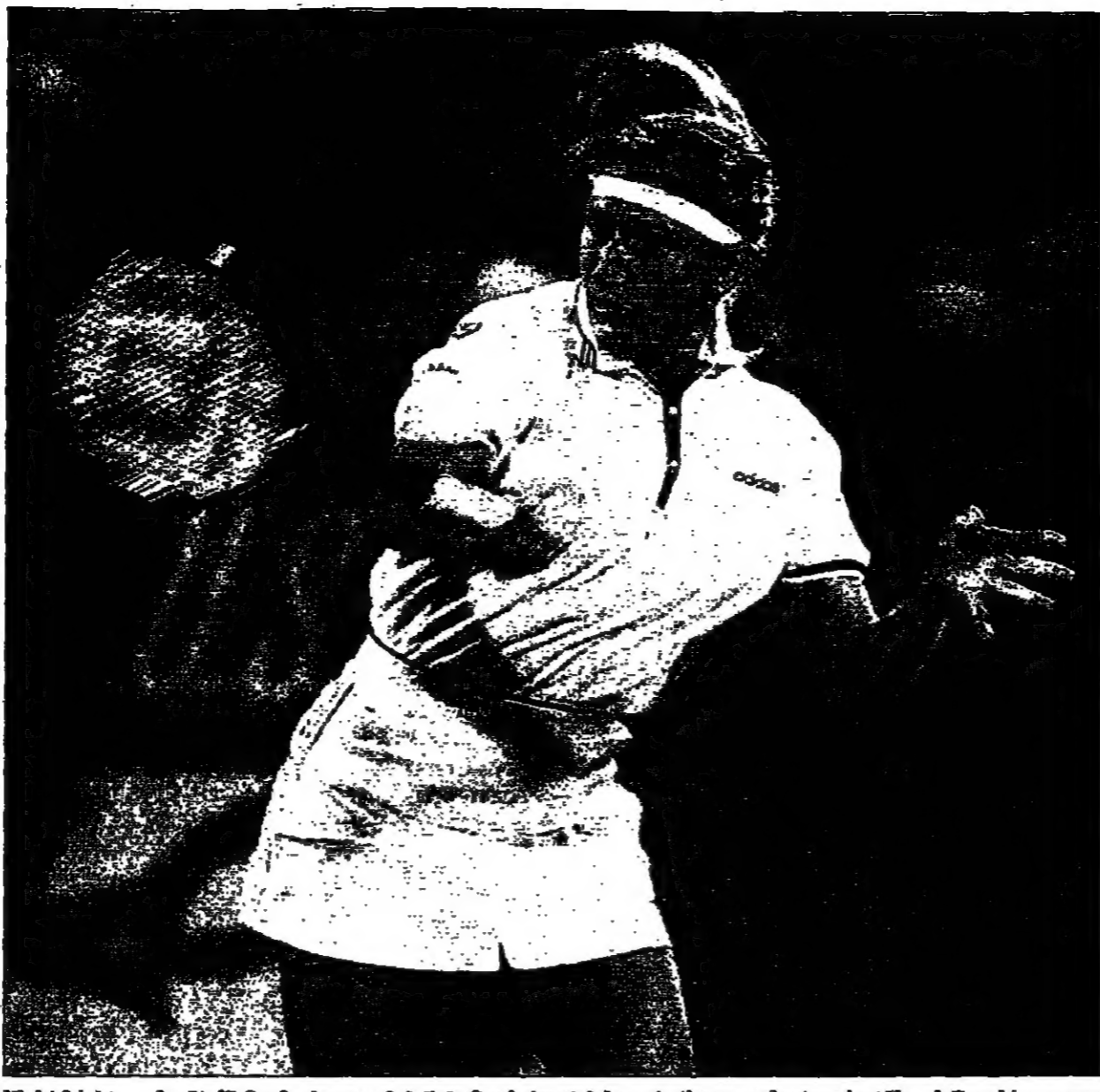
SAINSBURY is to open the first of its new "small-town" stores in March. In November. That is, the store in March (in Cambridgeshire) will open in November (the month after October). The company is pondering its advertising to ensure that March customers turn up in November. In March.

Belgium has taken the radical step of banning all ostrich and camel racing on its public roads, even though no-one can recall such races ever taking place.

SEE BACK PAGE

Tennis Too good to be true for Ferreira

Stephen Bierley at Flushing Meadow
SOME THINGS never change. The New York Mets appoint a new coach this week and still lose. Bob Doie makes yet another uncharismatic speech...



Night fright... for Staffi Graf, who won 6-3, 7-6 after being 5-2 down in the second set against Yanyuk Basuki. HENRY RAY

Cycling Boardman in debt to Tour and Obree

Barry Andrew in Manchester
CHRIS BOARDMAN did as he had promised and took part in a new pursuit into a new age at the velodrome here yesterday...

Lingfield card with guide to the latest form

A large section containing racing cards for Lingfield, Sedgefield (N.H.), and other venues. It includes race numbers, horse names, jockeys, and odds.

Racing Weaver ban brings Double blow

Chris Hawkins
JASON WEAVER was yesterday banned for 21 days, which includes a five-day suspended sentence, after falling foul of the Jockey Club's new 'totting-up' system...

Musselburgh runners and riders

A racing card for Musselburgh, listing various races, horse names, jockeys, and odds.

Results

A section listing the results of various races, including horse names, jockeys, and finishing positions.

A small advertisement for 'RACELINE' featuring a phone number and a logo.

Soccer

Pearce is obvious leading candidate

David Lacey finds Glenn Hoddle seeking a good talker to be his captain in the future

BY HIS choice of captain shall you know him — or not, as the case may be. Glenn Hoddle is due to reveal tomorrow the identity of the player who will lead England into their opening World Cup qualifier against Moldova in Kishinev on Sunday but the significance of his decision will be judged only in retrospect.

Pearce's junior and has shown many of the qualities mentioned by Hoddle, even though he has not been captain at Aston Villa. Although he could go for Pearce now, bearing in mind that Adams and Platt will eventually become available for recall, and leave Southgate for the future. It will still be surprising if Pearce is not given the chance at the outset.



Dances with Wolves... QPR's goalkeeper Sommer is equal to the challenge of the striker Roberts at Millmuck last night

Wiseman leads a tricky mission at Planet FA

Martin Thorpe meets the other head man charged with taking England into a new era

AS A LAWYER, a coroner and vice-chairman of Southampton, Keith Wiseman is used to being realistic. So it is no surprise when he says: "Some people want the world changed overnight but it doesn't work like that."

concessionary rates for England matches. But Wiseman also wants a place for tradition. He supports the FA's move to have clubs "which play an enormous part in the local community and in developing players"; he wants everyone in the game to "remember this is a sport and that not all decisions should be taken for commercial reasons".

any other business, but they don't get reported. "It is also wrong to infer that, because people on the FA Council represent the amateur game, they are amateurish. They are businessmen and professionals too, like that."

Ask him, crucially, if he wants to make the FA more like a business, he says: "I'm not sure, we're all old farts, aren't we? In fact it has given me enormous pleasure to become an old fart at the age of 51. I quite like it."

But Boro's assistant manager Viv Anderson said: "It's the other ankle this time. His injury is not a worry and we will be fit to play next week."

Under-21 squad for the European Championship tie in Moldova on Saturday. But Leicester's teenage striker Ernie Heskey is expected to be fit.

Grobelaar given new mission as Zimbabwe national manager

BRUCE GROBBELAAR yesterday underlined his desire to remain in football for several more years when he was appointed manager of the Zimbabwe national team.

Results

Table of sports results including Soccer, Tennis, and other categories.

First Division: Wolverhampton Wanderers 1, Queens Park Rangers 1

Dichio's special keeps Wolves at bay

Chris Moore "Footballers do not enjoy hoofing the ball as far as they can downfield and chasing after it. The squad inherited were short of both physical and mental strength, were under-coached, and displayed practically no desire to try and appreciate tactics."

Monty quick out of Ryder blocks

David Davies at Collingtree Park Gifford's carefully compiled round of six birdies and three bogeys left him one behind the European No. 1 Colin Montgomerie, a man who sadly has not played much golf recently.

Rowing Redgrave may go for fifth Olympic gold

STEVE REDGRAVE, who sailed straight after his latest Olympic triumph that anyone who saw him step into another boat had permission to shoot him, may reverse his decision to retire from rowing.

Olazabal given driving licence

THE European Tour will let Jose-Maria Olazabal, who suffers from rheumatoid arthritis in both feet, use a golf cart to transport himself around the course at the Open Novotel Perrier event in Bordeaux on October 17-20.

Sport in brief

Rugby League First and Second Division clubs concerned about future distribution of News Corporation's £87 million are talking of a breakaway and a return to winter play, writes Paul Fitzpatrick. They will hold an emergency meeting tomorrow. Shaun Edwards has signed a new two-year contract with Wigan. The 29-year-old needs knee surgery and will miss Great Britain's southern hemisphere tour.

Howell finished in 10th place for the old Guinness... England given final ultimatum...

سكنا من الامم

Rugby Union

Rowell finds no place for the old guard

Robert Armstrong on the omission of an experienced England quartet

WILL CARLING'S 31-year international career could be at an end after his omission from a 43-man England squad announced yesterday...

By the exacting standards of modern Test rugby, though, Carling is not too old to play for England...

The unique skills of the 31-year-old Guscott should not be casually discarded either...

The Bath quartet of Andy Robinson, Graham Dawes, Victor Uboagu and Jonathan Cald...

When Carling, Guscott, Richards and Underwood, who between them have won nearly 250 caps...

A SECOND BOTHAM ARRIVES IN STYLE



Chip off the old block... Ian Botham's 19-year-old son was called up for Hampshire yesterday...

Minor Counties MCC Trophy Final: Bedfordshire v Cheshire

Cheshire again the big cheese

Paul Weaver at Lord's sees Larkins miss out on another knock-out winner's medal

WAYNE LARKINS, one of the most entertaining and destructive of opening batsmen, has never been particularly lucky...

and Dalton, the captain of the England indoor team. The pair had put on 70 (Dalton 47) when Bedfordshire lost two wickets in three balls...

England given final ultimatum

ENGLAND face a nine-day countdown imposed by the other home unions during which they must come up with concessions demanded over television broadcasting rights...

David Hopps gives his top-five prediction as the Championship approaches its climax

No rest for Cork in the title chase

DOMINIC CORK, omitted from England's Texaco Trophy squad on the grounds that fatigue has reduced him from a world-class performer to a moderate...

Cricket

Law severe on domestic treadmill

Mike Selvey on England's problems as they prepare to face Pakistan again

IN THE aftermath of the overwhelming defeat by Pakistan in the Test series further stinging criticism has been aimed at the system which produces England cricketers...

Speaking yesterday from Sri Lanka, where he is on tour with Australia, Law said that there were 'a lot of guys playing county cricket who would not play first-class cricket anywhere else in the world'...

Law is the latest in a line of overseas players who have played in county cricket and departed disillusioned with the standards and stimulation. Frequently, Law said, even in his brief season (he left Essex two weeks ago to join Australia, although he may rejoin them for the championship run in) there were days when he had to not summon the mental capacity to compete...

There are good players with the talent to play international cricket, he said, 'but the fact that they play so much takes away their edge and they become less effective as the season goes on. You can turn up for a game so tired that you don't want to be there and, if that's the case, you shouldn't be playing. In England you have to learn to pace yourself and get 'up' for the important games.'

In some matches, if someone else is doing well, you might find yourself thinking 'well, if I get out, it's a bit of a bonus because I can put my feet up and have a sleep'. In Australia we have only 10 games a season and everyone goes at it hell for leather for all four days of every game. That's why our competition is so much stronger...

Surrey snub TCCB over Lewis

SURREY will defy the Test and County Cricket Board by playing Chris Lewis in their crucial Championship match with Warwickshire at The Oval which begins today.

Scoreboard

Table with columns for County Championship, Division One, Division Two, and Test matches, listing teams, scores, and players.

Cricket

News and Scores 0891 22 88 +

Cricket

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Law... left disillusioned

Second XI Championship

Table listing scores for the Second XI Championship across various counties.

Cricket

News and Scores 0891 22 88 +

Texaco Trophy

Table listing match reports for the Texaco Trophy, including teams and scores.

Cricket

Complete county scores 0891 22 88 30

Rusedski crashes out in New York, page 13
Europe begins the Ryder campaign, page 14

Hoddle ponders the captaincy, page 14
Carling left in the shadows, page 15

SportsGuardian

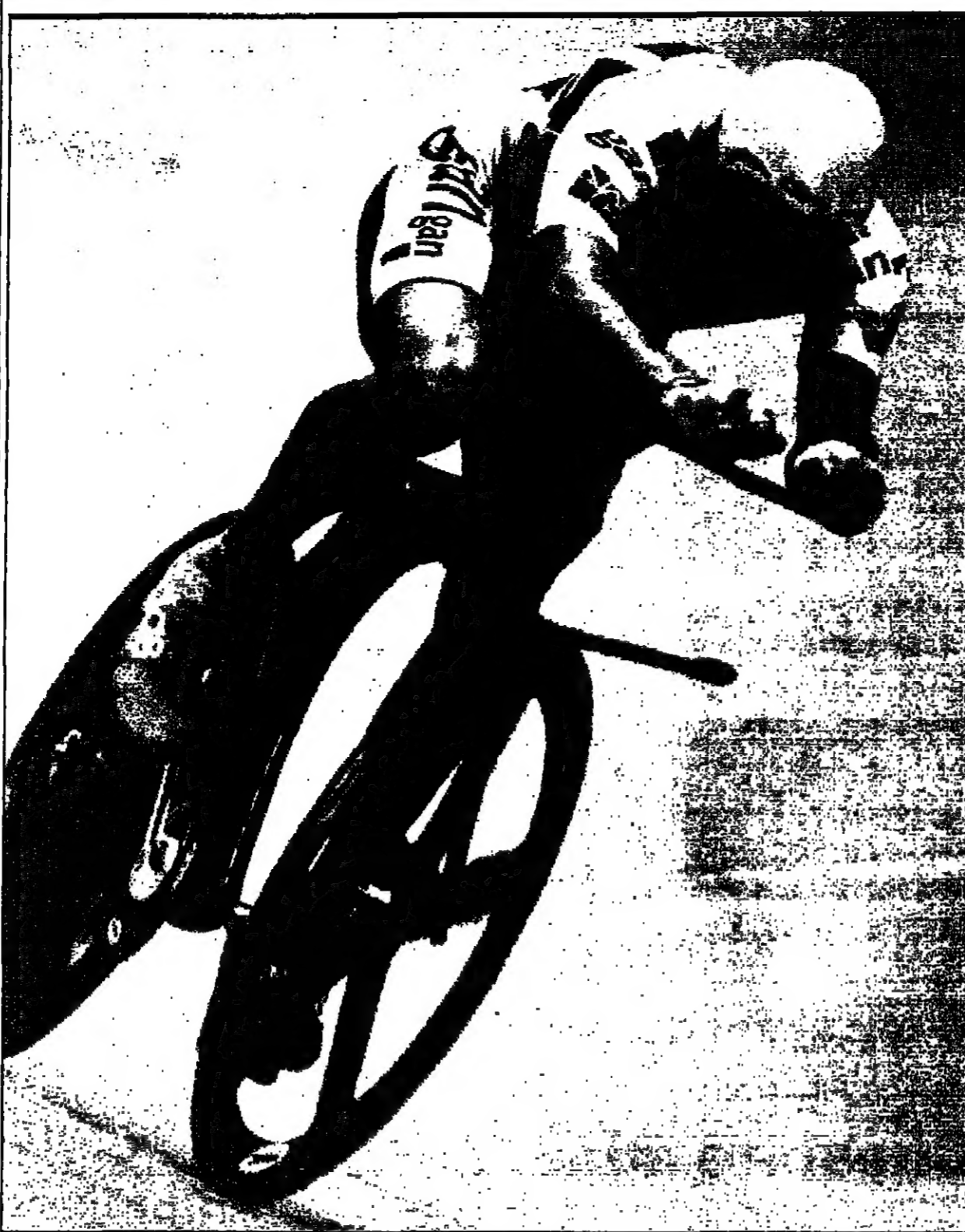
Graham rejects City job offer

Martin Thorpe on the latest twist in the Maine Road saga

GORGE GRAHAM last night rejected the chance to become manager of Manchester City, leaving Bruce Rioch and Jack Charlton as the front-runners to take over at Maine Road. The former Arsenal boss was the early favourite to replace Alan Ball after admitting on Tuesday that he was attracted by the job. His interest was reciprocated but, after making a series of phone calls to contacts close to the club yesterday, Graham had uncovered so many problems at the club — chief among them lack of money for new players — that he decided against the move north. City's chairman Francis Lee is understood to have contacted Graham late yesterday in the hope of agreeing a deal, only to be told the bad news. Graham's change of mind is surprising given that he had categorised City as the sort of club that would appeal to him. "I would only consider going back with a big club that had real ambition and potential," he said on Tuesday. "City most certainly fit those criteria." But Graham soon realised that he would probably have to sell the crowd's favourite Georgi Kinkladze to fund the purchase of new players.

Graham was also worried that City's propensity to change managers as soon as things go wrong — 14 in 24 years — might mean he would not get sufficient time to transform the club's fortunes on the pitch. On top of all that he questioned Lee's willingness to refrain from dabbling in team affairs and was put off by the constant rumours of boardroom splits and possible takeovers. Graham's snub is another blow for City's long-suffering fans who want a high-profile manager with a proven track record to lift the team. Rioch, Graham's successor at Arsenal, remains an obvious candidate although there could be complications over compensation following his recent sacking. The two parties are still discussing severance terms but, if Rioch found himself re-employed, Arsenal could argue that he had not lost out to the same degree and seek to reduce the payment. Last night City's directors held an emergency board meeting at which it is believed they discussed the possibility of inviting Charlton to assume control. Although Charlton has shown little or no interest in ending his self-imposed exile from football, Lee recognises that he is one of the few managers in Britain who revels in drawing extraordinary performances from ordinary players.

BOARDMAN SMASHES PURSUIT RECORD



Pursuit of excellence... Chris Boardman stretches for the record at the World Track Championships in Manchester. MAX MASH

Half chance for Carling to hit back



Frank Keating

IN SPITE of Twickenham's comely flanneling — "the selectors are already aware of their qualities" — you do not need to know how to read tea-leaves to realise that Jack Rowell has at last plucked up the courage to hand the dreaded black-spot to Will Carling. Rory Underwood, Dean Richards and Jeremy Guscott, the four stalwart mucksters of England's triumphant recent years. They have each passed their 30th birthday. So have Victor Ubagli, Jon Callard, Andy Robinson and Graham Dawe, the Bath centre's also omitted from the England squad's opening training sessions, and one fancies that this quartet will have got the message loud and clear that their sponsored Cellnet telephones will not be ringing with good news from Twickenham any more. It was actually got to see some rugby when the smoke clears, it will be interesting to discover how Carling responds to Rowell's almost sacrilegious cheek. His partnership with rugby league's Gary Connolly in the centre for Harlequins will begin next week and is one of the myriad of spectacular prospects to relish in the new season — if and when the squabbling stops, that is.

Carling welcomed Connolly to London yesterday as "the best centre in Britain". Mind you, the previous day the former England captain had hinted that he might enjoy a run inside Connolly — as a fly-half — this season. There the swarthy little thunder-thighs would be able to baunt Rowell and show the manager he had not got rid of his turbulent former skipper that easily. Certainly Carling will be a fixture on both the back pages and the front for a long time to come.

One of his stated reasons for so dramatically tossing in his seals of office as captain at the end of last season was that he believed he would have a far better chance of continuing his international career if he rejoined the ranks. Carling's relief was palpable as he made his last after-dinner speech as captain at the Hilton Hotel banquet following England's Champi-

onship winning victory against Ireland in March. "Phew, thank the Lord for that," he muttered when told he would no more have to sit at the top table with the blacked committee buffers. He had been up there since he was a callow 22. Only seven times after his 66 international appearances had he been down-table gawling and gawling with "the boys" — and those seven times were "so long ago that I can scarcely remember whether or not I was under the table anyway". How strange it is, meanwhile, to salute the end of the rugby league season when the rugby union calendar is just about to begin. It was a thrill on Monday to be in the throng at that squat, low-slung and heaving little corrugated crucible at Knowsley Road when St Helens beat Warrington to put one over Wigan, their grand and un-neighbourly tormentors for so long, and become the first club to win rugby league's inaugural summertime championship. The trophy itself, as one might expect with Mr Murdoch's cameras around, was almost as big as little Bobby Goulding, captain of the Saints. But Goulding gleamed more — with pride.

KNOWSLEY Road cannot have had a more significant day since September 2, 1958, when New Zealand began their planned 28-match tour against St Helens. During the match Germany invaded Poland, Mr Chamberlain declared war the following day and within a week the New Zealanders were sailing home. Now, 27 years later, it is rugby league itself which is at battle stations, half still sceptical about the "sell-out" to summer and Sky, those in the other corner acclaiming saviour status for the new, sunnier and less introverted format. In such a summer, with European soccer and the Olympics Games as rival treats, rugby league would seem to have reinvented itself dramatically well. It certainly seemed that it had at Knowsley Road on Monday.

What must be more worrying to the committed league devotee was the sudden feeling of the hitar being bit, the poaching of stars by the other code. We shall see. The foundations flap about the freely realistic fifth is fun and any day now the hot-air Celts will have to grovel over humble yie. But whether the union game in Britain will become rich to legit its new professionalism or bankrupt by Christmas remains to be seen. Watch this space.

'Superman' ride is just a prelude

CHRISS BOARDMAN lopped six seconds off the world 4,000-metre pursuit record in the first round of the World Track Championships at the Manchester velodrome yesterday with a time of 4min 13.35sec. The Wirral-based rider, using the "Superman" position (with arms fully stretched) for the first time in competi-

tion, broke the record set by Italy's Andrea Collinelli at last month's Olympics. "We decided to go for the time in the early round," said the 28-year-old, who should today secure Britain's fourth successive world pursuit title. "After that we could concentrate on winning the title."

Report, page 13

BECKSENTRICS

THE WEIRD AND WONDERFUL WORLD OF EUROPE'S FREE THINKERS

EURO STAR OF THE WEEK

LICENSED FOOL

Becksentrics is not alone in its appreciation of some of Europe's quirkier citizens. Belgium in December has recently bestowed a civic award upon Percy Wilson, 74, who spends every weekend shopping in a monkey dress. Clearly, Belgium expects everyone to do their duty — and do it whilst wearing a gorilla suit.



Belgium has banned camel and ostrich racing on public roads. But a spokesman for the country's local councils was unsure why. "As far as we know, no-one has ever tried to race camels or ostriches here before." Still, it is worth passing the law, you never know when it might come in handy.

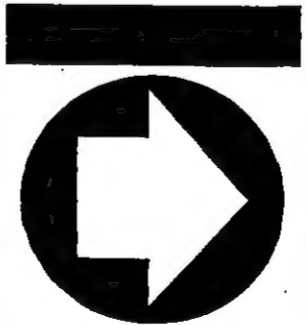
PUPPY LOVE

It was a beautiful occasion. The bride wore lace, the groom a grey tuxedo and at that most touching of moments the happy couple, Mali and Stencyn, turned around and licked each other. For Bethan Gapper, 28, of Ystrad Mynach, Mid Glamorgan, it was a dream come true. She had spent three hundred pounds on this wedding for her two Cocker spaniels, and said she would treasure her memory of it for years to come.

DEATH BECOMES HIM

Death, it has been observed, can be a bit of a downer. And funerals are seldom much fun — unless they are in the hands of Rodney Ford, 56, of Norton, Sheffield. Challenging the age-old wisdom that death be dark, he is marketing an alternative: brightly-coloured coffins in animal shapes of your choice. The sight of Aunt Beryl being carried to a better place, safe in the belly of a psychedelic fish, may bring tears of different kind.

PLAYING BY THEIR OWN RULES

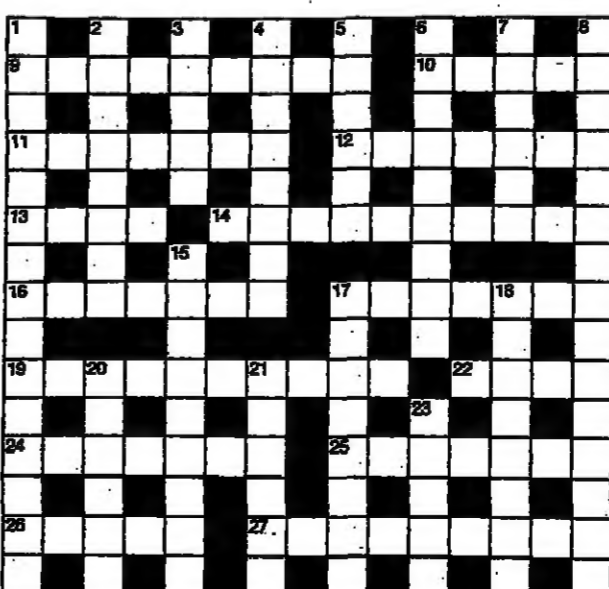


"When you read Levi, you feel like you have become friends with him," says Turturro. "You feel much more human."

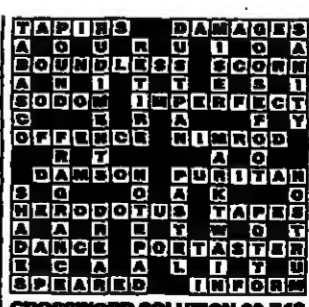
G2 page 10

Guardian Crossword No 20,744

Set by Rufus



- Across**
- 9 It's poisonous, thanks to natural mutation (8)
 - 10 Final word from new aide to union-leader (5)
 - 11 Scoring in many games but not tennis (7)
 - 12 They are made to scale (7)
 - 13 Primate seen around Sunday in church (4)
 - 14 Knotty garlic problem? (5,5)
 - 16 Dery order was void (7)
 - 17 Dogfish provides sport in Scotland (7)
 - 19 Meat-pie can be served free (10)
 - 22 Dancing habit of a Bishop (4)
 - 24 Apathy I retain however moved (7)
 - 25 Expression of approval for record return on examination of accounts (7)
- Down**
- 1 Unpleasant words heard during a road hold-up in the past (5,3,7)
 - 2 Disturbing poster seen around the street results in objections (8)
 - 3 One left in dark (5)
 - 4 Use a stop over, a humble dwelling (5)
 - 5 Ballerina didn't finish with a physiologist (6)
 - 6 Dishonest dealer (4-5)
 - 7 How to amuse motorists? Harshly! (6)
 - 8 Gets in the hit parade (4,3,8)
 - 15 Oriental here on business gets summons (9)
 - 17 Stone pitcher (8)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,744

- 18 Flood means Aunt Enid has to move (8)
- 20 Title Father comes up with for an ancestor (6)
- 21 Pleads, we hear, for approval (6)
- 23 They're inclined to be dishonest schemes (5)

Solution tomorrow

22 Stuck? Then call our solutions line on 0919 338 228. Calls cost 35p per min, plus 10p per min at other times. Service supplied by ATS